

Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A

ISSUE No. 12 1995

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**WHAT A
WEEKEND!**
AAA Seminar
Report

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Special Feature

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LAUNCHED**



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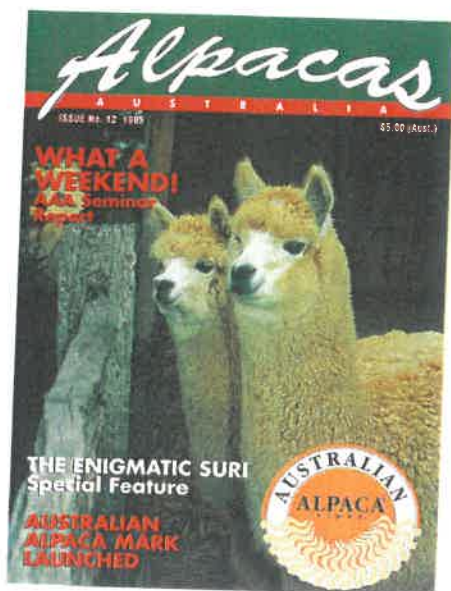
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Message from the President

From *Cria to Criation* was the title of our highly successful industry seminar held at the Deakin University Campus, Geelong in July. From the opening session by Dr Walter Bravo, on female alpaca reproduction, to the outstanding fashion parade organised by Philippa Ernst, and the open forum that wound up proceedings, attendees were kept busy with a host of presentations and activities.

The organisation by our committee, led by Roger Haldane, coupled with our AAA office's attention to detail and the team led by Noreen Nicholson at Deakin, led to a smoothly run seminar.

One of the highlights, in my personal view, was the presentation to me by the Fibre Research and Development Sub-committee of the original, framed Australian Alpaca Mark. The AAA acknowledges, with gratitude, designer Philippa Ernst's assignment of copyright on the Mark to the Association.

Of the two hundred and seventy-plus members at the seminar, 70 to 80 per cent were first-timers. The challenge is there for the future to attract a higher percentage of attendees who have previously participated in our seminars.

The seminar ended our active year and our Annual General Meeting at the Moonee Valley Race Course was held on August 27. Elections of office bearers are part of the AGM and there was concern that only four women were candidates. Considering the amount of work done both for the Association and within the industry as a whole by women, it is hoped that there will be many more female can-



didates next year. Congratulations and welcome aboard to all successful candidates.

The Association has decided to widen the distribution of *Alpacas Australia*. This and the next three issues will be in magazine stands of selected newsagencies. If you are reading our magazine for the first time, I hope you are enjoying learning about alpacas.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking a number of people without whose work and assistance, our magazine would never see the light of day. They are: Janie Hicks and Wendy Hill, who make up the editorial sub-committee with assistance of others from time to time; the AAA staff of Jenny Jones, Joanne Rothque and Sandra Wright; our editor, Carol Hosking who tries to keep us all meeting deadlines; and Joy Vellios who makes sure that the advertisements are in place.

As we enter a 'new year' in the history of the Australian Alpaca Association, may I wish all members peace; prosperity and many healthy cria.

Gray Morgan

Alpacas
AUSTRALIA

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FASHION Focus

an interview with *Emery Angles*

.....
by **Michael Stringer**

*A talk with a man who
believes alpacas are their
own best marketing tool.*

Emery Angles, Managing Director of Suave International, is a softly spoken gentleman of mature years, who has a twinkle in his eye and a wealth of experience and knowledge on the fickle fashion industry, that comes from nearly half a century in the business.

He was born in Budapest, Hungary and came to Australia as a young man, in 1949. He began working in a knitting mill and in a short time became a

partner in that mill. He learnt as much as he could about knitting production methods, about marketing and the fashion business. In 1960 he began Suave. His goal was to provide high quality fashion garments for men at a time when Australian fashion was very basic and elementary in both design and quality. Today Emery has several labels. *Suave International* is the mainstream mens wear. *Dunvegan Skye* features a range of garments man-



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Not all Alpacas are the same.

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ufactured from rare fibres. *Members Only* is for the younger market; and the newest, *Alpaca D'oro* promotes fashion products made from alpaca for both men and women. I asked him about the extensive range of alpaca garments in his showroom. A smile came across his face and his eyes twinkled a little more; he is proud of what must be the largest wholesale range of alpaca garments in Australia. They range from knits to beautiful jackets.

Suave has a wide export market and Emery is often abroad on business. It was on one of these trips, seven years ago, that Emery was asked by a Japanese buyer, 'Why don't you Australians produce alpaca?' They discussed the properties and quality of alpaca and this prompted Emery to make alpaca a significant part of his scene: to learn about it and to promote the outstanding features of alpaca to Australians and the world markets.

Leaning forward in his seat to emphasise, Emery told me, 'Alpaca is a wonderful fibre with properties that no other fibre has and I think that it represents really good value for money'.

He feels that alpaca could penetrate over 30% of the fashion market.

'The top 5% can both afford it and look for the quality. The next 25% will require efficient production methods and the economies of scale to keep the price at an equitable level.'

He strongly believes that we must promote the qualities of alpaca to the public at large. Most don't know what alpaca is and, in particular, they don't know the qualities of the fibre.

Without doubt he feels the most important thing about alpaca is its weightlessness, followed by its wonderful thermal properties.

'It can provide wonderful insulation without having two kilograms on your back.'

In the Australian climate a fabric that is weightless is suitable for all sea-

sons. It keeps you warm in winter, preventing your warmth from getting out and cool in summer by preventing the heat from getting in.

The biggest markets for alpaca are the USA, Japan and continental Europe. In Europe there is a strong revival, particularly in Germany, France and Italy, all of whom are very fashion conscious.

'The United States is a huge market but very fickle and there is no substantial marketing program to pro-

mote alpaca garments within its fashion industry,' Emery commented. 'What the Americans need is a similar exposure to that which occurred 25 years ago when Arnold Palmer wore alpaca cardigans playing golf.'

According to Angles, Japan is a very quality conscious market. The Japanese understand the major benefits of alpaca, but, they are also very conscious of the fashion capitals of the world: Rome, Paris and New York. If these fashion centres get a feel for

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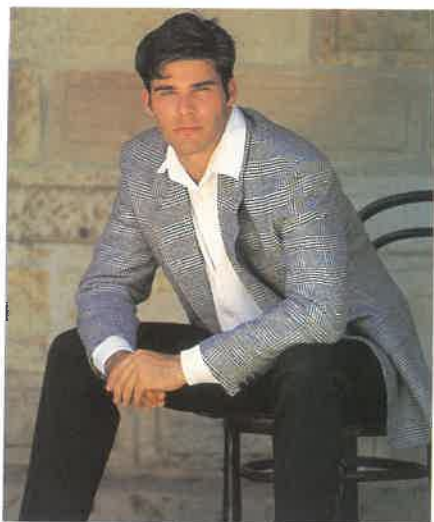
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alpaca or any fabric, then this has an overnight effect on the Japanese and world demand for alpaca.

'To establish a viable Australian Alpaca fibre industry then the economies of scale must come into the equation,' he said.

'We must establish what is the minimum and determine the capital, the infrastructure and marketing support required. There is tremendous scope for the Australian alpaca industry. We must realise that to support the market demand, we will have to import finished product from overseas for



The casual elegance of alpaca provides style in all settings.

many years to come. We don't have the technology or the equipment, at present, to do the full range of fashion garments en mass. With the Australian alpaca herd being only about 0.4% the size of the herd in Peru, we have a long way to go.'

'The future of the Australian alpaca industry depends on its ability to produce fleece, which in turn makes the development and investment in the infrastructure to support a viable commercial proposition a very important element,' Emery said.

'Australia needs to establish an industry base of at least 20 times as many animals as we have at present,' he continued. 'This task will not be completed overnight.'

Emery Angles believes that, while we are developing the animal base of the industry, we should, concurrently, be developing a market awareness program for alpaca: letting the buying public know what alpaca is. We should be promoting the outstanding and unique features and benefits of alpaca: its weightless, thermal, non-pilling and long-wearing properties. We must promote to the fashion industry and to the retailers, who are not well informed about alpaca. Point



Alpaca is cosily warm and feels great next to your skin.

of sale promotions are a major way to get to the end user, the retail market.

Angles feels the animals themselves are most appealing and very conducive to fashion promotions. They also represent the source of the fibre. The sheep industry uses a flock of sheep as a fashion promotion. The alpaca industry, he believes, should use the attractive photographs of groups of alpacas in country settings.

Emery Angles' parting comment was, 'Mike, I really believe in alpaca. It is so unique we must all do everything we can to promote it to the Australian and international fashion industries and to the buying public.'

Emily meets Milo

Every once in a while, something significant and special will happen, that will make you re-evaluate your being. This happened in March to a group of us at 'Farm World' field days in Warragul, Victoria.

We were as busy as ants in a pot of honey, cajoling one and all to appreciate the benefits of alpaca. That was, until Emily met Milo.

Emily Galbraith, just nine years old, was diagnosed with leukaemia in November 1994. Emily and her parents (members of the AAA) had come to see the alpacas at one of Australia's biggest agricultural field days.

When a very frail Emily set eyes on bottle-fed Milo, the communion was magnetic. Young Milo, the alpaca, had lost mum when she was one month old. She was immediately charmed by Emily's tender approach and softly hummed a snugly 'Hello'. By now, we'd forgotten promotional banter and huddled around snapping photos and encouraging the occasion.

After a bottle feed, Milo was off for a stroll with Emily. As they disappeared on an adventure together, there was some serious contemplation going on behind the moist eyes around me; including my own.

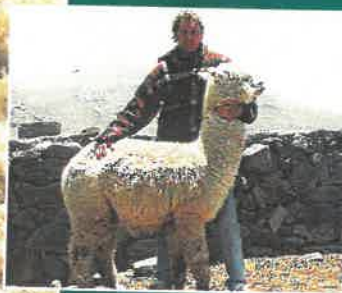


It was wonderful to hear from Bill and Mary Galbraith that, in early August and only half way through her two-year treatment, Emily is progressing nicely.

From all people alpaca, to Emily and her mum and dad, we wish you a healthy and rosy future. [Alan Cousill]

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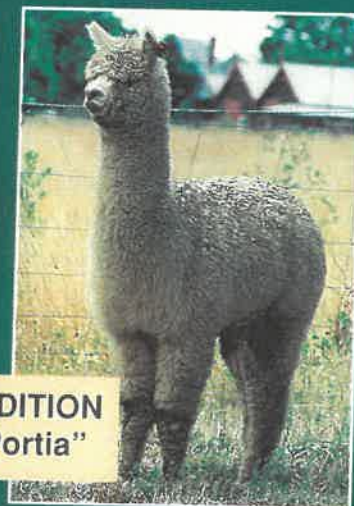
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Australian Alpaca Mark launched

We will soon see products carrying a distinctive logo that will give the public two important pieces of information: the products are high quality and they are made from Australian alpaca.

AAA members who attended the Industry Seminar at Deakin University in Geelong participated in an exciting and historic event — the launch of the Association's Australian Alpaca Mark.

This is another significant step for our new Australian fibre industry that is developing more quickly than anyone could have imagined when the Australian Alpaca Association was formed just five years ago.

The alpaca industry has never lost sight of its ultimate goals: to produce high quality alpaca fibre; to have it processed in Australia; and to sell its products both locally and overseas. The Alpaca Mark will signify Australian fibre made into Australian product. Its use will be controlled by license and will appear only on goods of a standard high enough to enhance the reputation of Australian alpaca fibre.

The Association's Fibre Research and Development Committee began the process of development by setting down some ideas and directions.

Enter Philippa Ernst, a member of that committee, whose reputation for creativity was about to be put to the test. Fibre being central to the theme of the mark, Philippa plucked a staple from a friendly alpaca and sharpened her pencil. The result was a sketch of a natural staple with a slightly weathered tip at one end and feathering at the other. This image now forms an integral part of the Mark. Further development of the sketch and accompanying design work now commenced, involving faxes, phone calls, comments, opinions and a great many trips to and from a long-suffering artist. The first draft appeared in time for the following Fibre Committee meeting.

The man with a penchant for colouring in, Roger Haldane, brought out his crayons. There was a great deal of photocopying, cutting and pasting; more discussion; more cutting and pasting and much more thoughtful consideration. Finally the Mark, complete with colour scheme, was completed to the Committee's satisfaction. Proudly, it was presented to the National Committee for endorsement. Then, off to the final process — the professional drawing of the Australian Alpaca Mark.

On Sunday afternoon, July 8 1995, the Association launched the Mark. Those assembled toasted the occasion with champagne, listened to Chris Williams' official launching speech and saw a jubilant Gray Morgan receive a framed, full colour representation of the Mark in its three versions.

Over time, the Australian Alpaca Mark will become a symbol of quality, promoting the Australian industry.

WHAT A WEEKEND!



Where to start? Probably by saying to those who didn't attend — EAT YOUR HEART OUT! This was a great 1995 Industry Seminar, 'From Cria to Criation'.

The organisers of the Seminar are to be highly congratulated on a very well run seminar.

The choice of speakers was excellent and a broad range of topics was covered. Those who attended took home a very smartly bound presentation of all the speakers' notes.

Happily, the AAA has printed a number of extra copies of these at the ridiculously low price of \$22.00. And although it won't be quite as good as actually hearing the material delivered, there's a mine of very useful

information waiting within its pages. Next issue, we'll reprint the notes of Bruce McGregor, Senior Animal Scientist, Victorian Department of Agriculture. An extraordinarily informative piece, it is indicative of the standard of material delivered at the seminar.

But you won't want to miss:

Dr Walter Bravo: male and female alpaca reproduction;

Dianne Condon: preparing animals for showing;

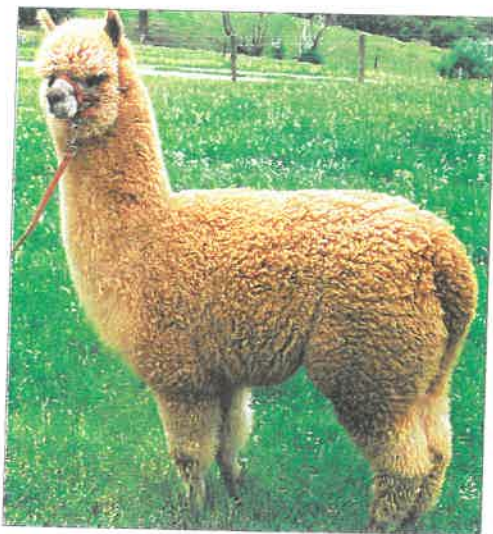
Wayne Jenkins: photographing alpacas;

Peter Illingworth: tax matters;

Ian Knox: learning from the past;

Dr Ewan McMillan: on current trends in alpaca medicine;

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Robert Weatherall: alpaca, its markets and uses.

But it wasn't all hard work. The Saturday dinner dance was a sumptuous affair — delicious food and wine. Entertainment was provided by the Paradiddle Bush Band who persuaded those of us who hadn't left the dance floor quickly enough, to participate in a round of bush dancing. This was fun but extremely energetic. Walter Bravo had obviously chased enough alpacas around various paddocks to enable him to throw himself wholeheartedly into this weird Australian dance. He seemed to enjoy it. On the other hand, he may have considered the exercise valuable research into the oddities of alpaca people in Australia.

Sunday at 1.30 saw us in the foyer of Theatre LT1 to witness the launch of the Australian Alpaca Mark. Champagne flowed (thank you to Wilburtins Insurance) and we saw the Mark for the first time.

Then, into the lecture hall for an insight into the rag trade and some fascinating Melbourne history from Peter Waddell a director of Dominex Pty Ltd, a long-established Melbourne fashion house.

And so, to the fashion parade. This was a fabulous sound and movement show that combined the percussion and agility of South American music and dance with a dazzling parade of superb women's, men's and children's fashions.

The work of many people went into producing the parade and the AAA wishes to say thank you to all.



Special mention needs to be made of the creativity of Philippa Ernst, and hard work of Trina Pollack, Nikki Forest, Andy Trevaris, Amy and Thea Haldane. Haldane and Pucara Alpaca Studs also provided special help. For the fabulous fashions, many thanks to: Giglio, Daimaru, Tumi Knits, Penny Black, Karen Pirie, Capalba Park, Alpaca D'Oro, Studio Italia, Weiss Pringle, Haldane Alpaca, Naturally Alpaca, Pucara Alpaca Stud, Suave International, Corichancha Alpaca Stud and Australian Alpaca Centre.

The final hour of the seminar was devoted to an open forum with all the guest speakers taking questions from the audience.

Questions ranged over a wide range of topics. Answers were full and informative. In one case, some very surprising information emerged.

Question: Is there any relationship between the feeding you give an alpaca and its ability to conceive boys or girls?

W. Bravo: I don't think there is a relationship between the amount of feeding or the feeding available on the sexual outcome. Anyway, in a random sample, 50% would be female and 50% would be males.

A. Jinks: Another interesting thing, I have toast and marmalade for breakfast in the morning and I've had two females and one male.

Question: Were they children or alpacas?

AOBA 1995 Conference

The American Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association's Annual Conference was held at the Holiday Inn, Estes Park, Colorado from June 7 to 11. The title of the conference was 'Creating Your Alpaca Future' with four topics covered by the sessions: Health and Management; Breeding and Birthing; Marketing; and Fibre.

Speakers included very experienced veterinarians such as Dr Murray Fowler, Dr Gregg Adams, Dr David Pugh and Dr Robert Pollard (who are all university professors or active practitioners). There were also a number of full-time breeders with a wealth of alpaca experience.

The conference lectures were versatile and met the needs of new breeders, yet-to-be-breeders and experi-

enced breeders. All lectures were timetabled twice over the three days and there were often four or five that ran concurrently. The lecture rooms were small and invited good discussions between audience and speakers.

An excellent service was provided by 'Consult Corner'. Guest speakers were timetabled to discuss any problems or answer questions in a small, intimate area that invited, friendly, non-confronting conversation.

There were also breeder panels, the members of which (all experienced breeders) discussed various issues, including how they tackled them, for example, choosing stud males, birthing and neonate care.

There were pre-conference clinics covering one and a half days for

which participants registered separately. These were titled 'Innovative Fibre Marketing', 'Genetics: From Buying to Breeding' and 'Conformation, Form and Function'. The keynote speaker was Julie Koenig, Ph.D, who covered genetics in regard to colour, fibre and breeding objectives (topics close to Australian breeders' hearts).

After the Conference a Post Conference Show Clinic was held along with a one-day Veterinary Seminary. In all, the Conference and associated activities went for five days.

Not far away, and running concurrently with the Conference was the Estes Park Wool Market where alpacas had a huge marquee. It has built up a reputation as a great venue for purchasing and showing. Breeders were

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there for four or five days, selling alpacas by private treaty. All the breeders' stands were beautifully presented (the alpacas were even fully washed as they arrived at the show!). Generally, one stud partner attended conference seminars while the other staffed the booth.

Judging was held on the third day. It had huacaya and suri classes and included children's agility classes. There are no championships; placings only are given.

The AOBA also had a marquee set up for hands-on, how-to activities such as toenail clipping, shearing, haltering, etc.

After gruelling days attending seminar sessions, delegates were entertained in style. The Australians had to loosen their belts before returning home!

As if a stylish, yet simple lunch on the first day wasn't sufficient, the following day we enjoyed a Fiber Fantasies Fashion Show Luncheon complete with handmade chocolate alpacas.

That evening we took part in the gambling activities at Madame A's Wild West Saloon. Tables were hired from a Denver gambling casino and studs sponsored each table and supplied a croupier. Alan Cousill was last seen carrying an enormous bundle of winning chips. Unfortunately we could not cash our chips back in – we could only use them to buy raffle tickets. What a way to raise money for alpaca research!

On Friday evening the AOBA Annual General Meeting was held over dinner in the dining room of the absolutely



A room at the Holiday Inn was set aside for the display of alpaca products.



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Part of the Australian contingent at the AOBa Gala Banquet (from left): Ron Hales, Helen Fritsch, Julie Bird, Christine Roffey and Pauline Nugent.

magnificent, recently restored, Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. No words could describe the incredible view of the Rocky Mountains from the front of the hotel.

The final evening was held at the Holiday Inn. This was the Gala Banquet and it was planned down to the last detail. Raffle prizes were drawn, sponsors and workers were thanked and the conference chairpersons, Linda and Fred Walker were applauded for their super effort.

Poised on the main stage was a huge ice sculpture of an alpaca and as centrepieces on each table — a hand blown, limited edition, glass alpaca.

Great fun was had by all, especially the Australians who continued on into the later hours line-dancing with Amanda Griffiths of Chualar Canyon Ranch.

All in all a momentous conference.

Aussie thanks must go to the lovely Marsha Hobert who helped us all with our arrangements and to the AOBa members who made us feel so welcome.

Aussie Kids Join Paca-Pac

Paige and Ashleigh Riley from Shelbory Park Alpacas, Arcadia, Sydney, travelled to the Rocky Mountains to join other kids from all over the USA in a Paca-Pac Kids Club four day program.

Although most activities were alpaca related, there was still plenty of time for enjoying the local area with rides on the trainway, hiking, bumper boating, sliding, mini-golfing and hay-riding.

Each morning the children met at 8.00 am for breakfast and continued with activities until 10.00 pm each night.

At the Fairgrounds, Paige (11) and Ashleigh (9) handled alpacas from Chualar Canyon Ranch in the Alpaca Agility Sweepstakes where they had to take their alpacas over an obstacle course. Ashleigh's alpaca didn't want to go over a bridge or jump some small obstacles, and Paige's little male refused to go backwards. It was, however, a great experience and one they will not forget in a long time.

Julie Safley did a great job co-ordinating activities and it is hoped that some of the kids will keep in contact. Already Paige and Ashleigh are asking if they can go back next year.



Paca-Pac Kids, Paige (left) and Ashleigh Riley with mum, Sherryl.



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Why Suris?

by Bill Wall
and Ron Cole

*From 'interested in'
to 'breeders of'...
all with the aid of
a computer*

We are often asked, 'Why suris?' by current alpaca owners and by those interested in entering the industry. As a result of this common enquiry, in this article we trace our path from initial interest in breeding alpacas to our present position as proud owners of suri alpacas.

Our interest in alpacas was sparked by several articles in *Town and Country Farmer* just before Christmas in 1993. The authors spoke to us through these articles with good sense and enthusiasm. Of particular note was the genuine invitation from almost all writers (who, from memory, were breeders at that time) to share their experiences freely with those of us who were interested in gathering more information or who were ready to enter the industry. After a couple of phone calls to these breeders (who proved to be as generous with their time and advice as their writings had suggested) we approached the Australian Alpaca Association for an information pack.

This information was studied with growing interest. One copy of *Alpacas Australia* arrived as an inclusion with the AAA information and this was a real eye-opener. The Association had been in operation for only a short time, yet this highly professional and informative quarterly magazine was in production. We immediately sent off for all back copies of *Alpacas Australia* and were delighted with the insights they afforded us.

Amongst the many articles absorbed with great interest were some few references to the suri type alpacas. Wool type of the suri was described as significantly different from that of the huacaya. It was considered by most to be even more desir-

able than the huacaya type and most notably, suris were reported as very rare in comparison with huacayas.

Several phone calls later, armed with more generously afforded advice from breeders, we decided to calculate some projections for the five year future and, from this, determine whether or not to commit ourselves to this new industry. This exercise, we reasoned, would be a five minute job.

Not so! However, it did become obvious within that short period that an analysis of likely outcomes from a breeding program, coupled with a financial projection, was an exercise of significant complexity. We realised that one female bred over five generations afforded more than four thousand different outcomes of final herd composition. The computer appeared to be the tool which would best allow such complex analysis and our pursuit of mathematical modelling to determine outcomes of breeding programs was begun. Data was collected from the best sources available to develop the model.

A model allows inputs (e.g. cost of service, agistment prices) to be varied. Thus, many years of practical animal husbandry and financial management may be address together over a short time frame.

Of course, the outcomes from the model are only as good as the quality of input information and much effort went into checking and cross checking that our inputs derived from the best advice available.

Thus we came to an analysis of suri versus huacaya. Before the model was run, we expected that the suri would emerge as a better financial proposition than the huacaya. This proved to be the case, but we were genuinely and

pleasantly surprised by the magnitude of the difference. There was no comparison. The suri alternative was superior by a huge margin.

We had already decided that alpacas were a real investment proposition, due to their single births, long gestation period, relative freedom from disease and the availability of insurance.

Now we had a way to even further reduce the investment risk by choosing suris over huacayas. This difference was due to the great scarcity of suris; the consequent sale prices; and the similarity in market value between female and male suri cria. The result of analysis was that the decisions to enter the industry and to be suri breeders were easily made.

Although suris were rare at that time — only some thirty suris in Australia in February 1994 — we were able to identify animals for sale and were most thankful to be afforded the opportunity to pursue our goal.

Over the last eighteen months we have done much work in the area of mathematical modelling and have offered some of our work to the AAA for the benefit of all breeders.

An example of this is the 'Coat Colour Tables'* that tabulate the coat colour outcomes from all solid colour crosses in the Australian alpaca herd. These were produced from the AAA registration database with generous support from Ken Allston and Carol Watson. Our genetic work continues and our suri analyses are being further developed.

We listened with interest to Chris Tuckwell's positive comments on suris at a recent Queensland field day and have come to realise that the future for the suri is even more assured than we had bargained for. This is due to the generally agreed thesis that suri crosses with huacaya are most likely to result in suri wool type offspring; to the increasing difficulty in sourcing

suris from their homeland (Peru appears to be further restricting suri exports); to the scarcity of suris in Australia; and to new markets developing world wide.

Coloured suris (other than fawn) are not likely to be available from traditional overseas sources. Thus, if we are to have the desired variety of suri wool colours in Australia, we will have to breed our own. There is an opportunity for innovative and bold breeders to use the current knowledge of

alpaca genetics to develop superior coloured suris for Australian and world markets.

We are pleased with our decision to 'go suri' and have our first crias growing well. What's more, our girls are already pregnant again.

**[Ed: It's likely, by the time our next edition is published that the 'Coat Colour Tables' will be available in bound booklet form. More information will appear in December's Alpacas Australia.]*

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Tess — the survivor

.....
by **Randall Lieschke**

Tess survived a difficult birth, but the worst was yet to come.

Over the past couple of years, I have followed the story of Miracle Millie with great interest. The love and care her owners gave her must surely have been a big factor in her surviving so many hardships. I'd also like to thank Carolyn Jinks for her advice and help in saving our own little 'miracle', Tess.

On 24 March 1994, Tahlia began having her first baby. Two little black legs first appeared at 9 am but, half an hour later, little progress had been made. There was no sign of a nose and, as I felt inside Tahlia, I couldn't feel a head. I immediately rang the vet who dropped everything and jumped into his car. As I got off the phone, my mother was yelling for me to hurry.

With more contractions, Tahlia had pushed her baby out further. In fact, the entire back legs and pelvis were now out. A quick check showed the cria was a girl, but she was very still. I decided to give Tahlia a hand and pulled the baby the rest of the way out.

To our horror, the cria was not breathing. Her eyes were open, but glassy and there was no response when I touched them.

I picked her up by the back legs and fluid began to trickle from her mouth. I got my mother to hold her up while I squeezed her chest cavity in and out. I could hear the air bubbling in and out and after a couple of minutes she suddenly gasped for breath and revived.

Our vet arrived about 10 minutes later to find her sitting on the ground looking fine. He gave her a quick look over, but the drama was over — or so we thought.

Over the next couple of hours, Tess tried and tried to stand up, but her legs would not co-operate. She could

only manage to stand for a few seconds, and then only on the backs of her front feet. We also discovered that Tahlia had no milk for her new baby.

We again called our vet. He gave Tess an injection of steroids, and one to Tahlia to bring down her milk.

By 3.30 pm, Tess still could not properly stand, but Tahlia now had a little milk. We fed Tess with this and some electrolytes and we saw that she was gaining strength all the time.

She kept trying to walk but her front feet kept buckling over. For the next 24 hours we kept milking Tahlia and hand feeding Tess.

I decided to splint her front legs using thick cardboard tubes and taping her feet to make her walk on her soles. This enabled her to walk along slowly. The tape on her splints had to be readjusted every day as her tendons stretched.

We kept Tahlia and Tess in a small paddock beside the house with another female and her cria for company.



Tess at one week wearing one of her cardboard tube casts.

Tess was 4 days old when my mother saw the other female raking at Tess with her front foot. The cria was neither strong enough nor quick enough yet to get out of the way, but she seemed to be O.K.

The following week, Tess had an infected navel, but this cleared up fairly quickly with antibiotics. She slowly grew and became stronger and could walk well, but she was not very active and never ran around like a normal cria.

One day, at the end of April, my mother found five-week-old Tess lying on the ground. She could hardly hold her head up. We put her straight into the car and rushed her to the vet. X-rays and blood tests revealed that the female alpaca had inflicted severe damage. Tess had received five fractured ribs which had depressed one side of her rib-cage. There was also an infection present in her bones.

For the next couple of days she was

critically ill; the infection nearly killed her. She was put on a 6-week antibiotic course.

As she didn't have the strength to drink from her mum, we had to milk Tahlia and hand feed Tess. As a consequence, Tahlia's milk began to dry up, so we had to supplement it.

As Tess began to improve, she went back on to her mum, but still was not getting enough milk. We continued to bottle feed her with goats' milk and then Di-Vetelact. As soon as Tess had finished a bottle, she would go straight to her mum and have a drink as if to say 'This is what it *should* taste like'.

Tess is now twelve months old and perfectly healthy. She still has a

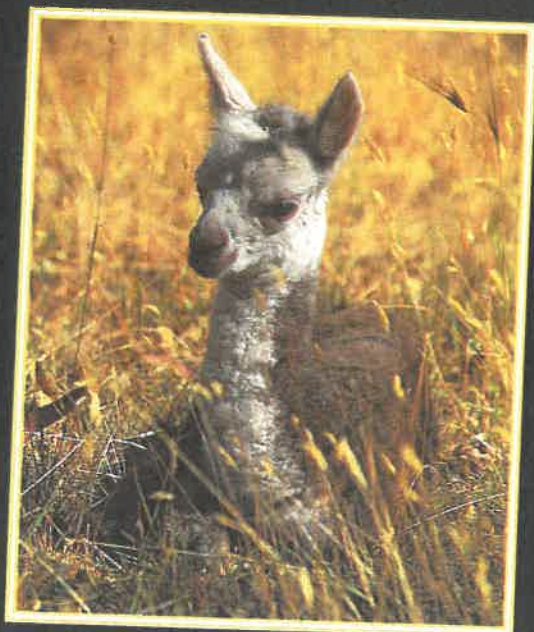


Tess, fit and well at one year.

depressed rib cage and is not as well grown as she should be, but apart from that, she is a beautiful little girl. As she trots over to greet us each morning and evening, we thank God that she made it through.

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The Alpaca Co-operative Ltd

.....
by Carol Hosking

*A report on how the
Co-operative is structured
and how it will operate.*

A national organisation based in Victoria, the Alpaca Co-operative Limited was officially formed on 8 March this year and is the result of two years' investigation by a working party of both the feasibility and practicalities of an Australian alpaca fibre marketing operation.

After consideration of a number of options, it was decided that a co-operative was the most appropriate structure for the undertaking. Organisationally, a co-operative was appealing; it was relatively inexpensive to establish; and there was no requirement for a prospectus to be issued.

The Co-operative is a non-profit, independent organisation that is permitted, under its rules and regulations, to engage in a wide range of activities designed to aid the expansion of its operations as a commercial enterprise.

Any surplus funds will be distributed among shareholders in the form of dividends.

The Foundation Board

The Members of Foundation Board of the Alpaca Co-operative Limited are:

David Muir, President

Executive Director and Co-founder of the Timbercorp Group of Companies, he is also Project Manager of five Coonawarra vineyards and the owner of a large South Australian alpaca herd.

Paul White, Secretary

Paul is an accountant, with sixteen years' experience in export market development. He is also Secretary of the Australian Malaysian Business Council.

Jennifer Cochrane, Member

A physiotherapist by profession, Jennifer is a past President of the Private Practitioners Group of the Australian Physiotherapy Association. She is also a Committee Member of the Eastern Region of the AAA and an alpaca breeder.

Alan Hamilton, Member

Alan is a past President of the Australian Alpacas Association and an alpaca breeder.

Alex Stevenson, Member

Treasurer of the Australian Alpacas Association, Alex is a chartered accountant and an alpaca breeder.

Elections

There is provision to expand the number of board members, if required.

From the time of the first Annual General Meeting, directors will be elected by the members of the Co-operative for a two-year term on a rotational basis i.e. two directors will retire one year and three the next.

The purpose of the Co-operative

According to the incorporation document:

The aim of the Co-operative is to maximise returns to grower members and to improve the overall quality of the Australian Alpaca clip by: receiving, warehousing, classing, blending, processing, manufacturing, marketing and promoting alpaca fibre, alpaca fibre products and animals, and other products as may be required.

Paul White expects the first Australian alpaca products to be marketed under the Co-operative's label will be released before the end of this year.

Apart from promotion, product development and research and development, the Co-operative also plans to obtain products complementary to maintaining alpacas, including feed and drenches. These will be available to members at competitive prices.

Membership

Membership is generally restricted to members of the Australian Alpaca Association, although there is provision for approval of non-AAA members by the Directors. This flexibility has been built into the structure to allow for membership by those who may be associated with the alpaca industry and whose membership may be deemed as beneficial to the Co-operative, for example, representatives of commercial partners.

There is also provision for joint and corporate membership.

In the case of joint membership, this could apply to members of the AAA, who are partners in an alpaca stud, or to a group of small breeders who would prefer to hold combined membership. In this case, the person whose name appears first on the membership application form would exercise voting rights on behalf of the joint membership. Partners or groups can decide on who should hold the voting rights and fill out their application accordingly.

In the case of corporate membership, the present indication is that such membership is open to corporate bodies which are substantially co-operative in nature.

The eligibility of a proprietary limited company for membership of the Co-operative is presently being considered by the Registrar of Co-operatives.

Costs of membership and share purchase

There is a \$50.00 entrance fee and an obligation to purchase a minimum of 2,000 shares in the co-operative. The cost of each share is presently \$1.00.

No member may hold more than 15% of the total shareholding of the Co-operative.

Shares may be transferred between members.

Membership rights

Each member has one vote, irrespective of the number of shares held. Members elect the Board and vote on matters of policy affecting the Co-operative. There are provisions to enable members to call meetings of the organisation for specific purposes.

Current activities

The first task of the Alpaca Co-operative Limited is to attract members. It

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is in this way that capital can be raised to sustain its planned marketing activities.

Members are invited to sell their alpaca fibre to the Co-operative. With a need to accumulate enough fibre to begin its task of product manufacture, the Co-op will delay payment to growers. The present sale terms are outlined in a standard letter forwarded to each new member of the Co-operative:

The Co-operative Board after considerable consultation with its members has decided to pay growers for their fibre on the following basis:

The net sale proceeds will be distributed to growers according to the fibre's weighted quality either on a once only basis following the sale or on a progress payment basis after deducting processing and selling costs. The date for any progress payment is approximately 2 years from the date of fibre delivery.

This letter also gives information on various matters, including: allocation of a grower number (which is also the number of the issued share certificate) and details on how and where to deliver fibre. It also includes a consignment note for the first delivery.

The Co-operative is buying full fleeces and plans to use all grades of fibre in the products it plans to have developed and marketed. It is also planning to install a system of bonus payments to growers of especially fine fleeces.

The first fleeces have already been transported to Cam Galbraith's Wool Pty Ltd at Geelong. Here it is being classed, blended and stored for processing. The fibre is being graded according to fineness, staple length and colour.

Longer lengths will go into the worsted system to be scoured, carded and combed. It will be spun into fine, strong yarns ideal for the manufacture of fine fabric. Shorter length fibre will go to the woollen spinning process.



Here the fibre is scoured and carded. This bulkier yarn is ideal for knitting wool, blankets and rugs. There are also well developed plans for using coarser fibre from legs and bellies.

Business Plan

Mr Bob Coombs of Rural Action has been awarded the contract to develop a detailed business plan for the Co-operative.

The Co-operative office

'The Mills' is an impressive building at 200 Arden Street, North Melbourne and is the location of the Alpaca Co-operative Ltd. As the operations of the Co-operative expand,

there are plans to extend the present working area and use available space in the building for meetings, temporary warehousing and display. There is also a convenient garden area where there are barbecue facilities and lawn — ideal for outdoor gatherings.

Secretary, Paul White is responsible for running the day-to-day business of the Co-operative. My interview with him, upon which this article is based, ran for at least two hours. He is obviously enthusiastic about his part in developing the Co-operative and optimistic about its future prospects. AAA members wanting further information can contact Paul during business hours by phone on (03) 9328 2220 or by fax on (03) 9326 6038.



Alan Hamilton and Robert Pearce of Woolshed Yarns, Broadford, examine a bale of alpaca fibre before classing.

Moving Alpacas

.....
by Jenny Jackson

Having tried a number of forms of transport, Jenny undertook the task of supervising the construction of an alpaca float built to specification.

In *Alpacas Australia* (issue Autumn 1994), I made a statement to the effect that having fifty alpacas on our stud had exceeded my wildest dreams. Now, in spring 1995 the number of our alpacas has passed 150. We do 'mobile matings' for alpacas we have sold to other growers. The vast distances between our clients' studs (up to six hours' driving time); and the frequency of our trips with alpacas have crystallised our thoughts on what is appropriate transport for alpacas. Hopefully, other breeders with similar needs may benefit from our findings.

We have frequently used stud stock transport companies with trucks to bring alpacas from the eastern states.

The trucks are cumbersome and need larger numbers of animals. Also, ease of access is not good.

Horse floats work well, although we find them too heavy for the purpose. Because of their height, they also create an unnecessary degree of wind resistance. On long journeys they tend to give you the feeling of driving into a brick wall.

Our Holden Jackaroo 4-wheel drive is excellent for one or two small alpacas. It is convenient and has air conditioned comfort for the alpacas. We select the animals that ride in the Jackaroo on the basis of temperament. The wrong selection can have rather unfortunate consequences for the

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A stock crate on the back of a utility is excellent, although a ramp is required to load alpacas and, in inclement weather, a canvas covering is needed.

A trailer with a crate serves a similar purpose. Using either of these during fine weather, when there's no need for a cover, also provides excellent promotional exposure and the effect of the wind as a cleaner of alpaca fleece is second to none.

Getting started

Two months ago, I finally convinced my husband, George, that we needed a custom-built alpaca float. George, by the way, is the sensible one. I probably would have accepted the quote of the first manufacturer I approached and would have wanted to have it finished 'yesterday'. However, I was persuaded to obtain quotes from almost

every float and trailer builder in Perth. It was a very worthwhile exercise. Besides great variations in prices, most manufacturers had valuable suggestions as to how I could improve my initial design.

From the quotes, I first selected a price (not the cheapest) and used it as a bargaining tool to obtain a cheaper deal from my preferred manufacturer. I had selected him not only because of the quality of his work, but also because of the closeness of his factory to our farm. That meant I could supervise the construction.

The price was set at \$6,500, including licensing and stamp duty.

We sold our horse float, but decided to keep our trailer and crate so that we always had back up transport on the farm for our alpacas in an emergency.

Our Float Requirements

We designed the float to be as light as possible to aid towing and minimise

extra fuel consumption. The tare weight is 750 kgs with a gross carrying capacity of 2,000 kgs. We used lighter metal framework than that of a horse float and light marine ply for the floor. The size is 3,800 mm (12 ft 6 in) by 1,680 mm (5 ft 6 in). I would have preferred a wider float, but there would have been too great a vision restriction from the side mirrors and a rougher ride for the alpacas on roads narrower than the float. The float carries nine good-sized alpacas and as many as fourteen weanlings.

Needless to say, the float has tandem axles both for safety and to give a smoother ride for our charges. I would not like to transport such valuable livestock on a single axle trailer.

The normal height of a horse float was not required. We lowered it from 2,100 mm (7 ft) to 1,650 mm (5 ft 5 in). Why this height? That is how tall I am. My six-foot-three spouse needs to duck his head every time he loads the alpacas. Nevertheless, it wasn't



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pure selfishness on my part. Choosing this height meant that the standard metal and marine ply sheets used in construction of the walls fitted perfectly without having to be cut. We also used inlaid axles to reduce the overall height by 100 mm. The reduced height certainly makes towing a breeze — so much so that I was fined for speeding on our first long journey towing the float.



The unit is fully enclosed in a fibreglass canopy. Gates and a ramp take up the rear. Ventilation is provided through a large vent that can be closed if necessary and through sliding side windows. The marine ply on the walls provides insulation and on the floor it has been coated with a waterproof moulded rubber made from old car tyres. The whole unit can be easily hosed for cleaning. Internally there are three removable side-opening partitions. These allows us the flexibility to separate animals — for example, stud males from females with cria. The partition gates are slightly above floor level so that they will open over the bedding straw. They are also removable and can be connected together to make an ideal portable holding pen outside the float. The tailgate is spring-loaded and acts as a ramp. We have fitted gates just inside the ramp to close the animals in the float when the ramp is still down to ensure there are no 'escapees'.



Our float has mechanical disk brakes, aluminium stone guards, five new tyres and wheel trims and an internal light. A friend, who is an electronic whiz, installed a tiny video

camera in the float, connected to a tiny viewer on the car dashboard. Being able to check all is well in the float, especially on long journeys, provides real peace of mind.

Externally, the float has been painted in our stud colour with a heavy duty urethane paint that should retain a 'new' look for years to come. Sign writing on the sides includes our stud logo. If there was a 'next time' for this exercise, I would consider adding a large picture of an alpaca to answer a frequent question: 'So you have miniature horses, do you?'

For the last 10,000 kilometres, the float has rarely been off the Jackaroo towball. I can't imagine how we managed without it. It has become indispensable, given the frequency and length of our trips and the number of alpacas we transport.



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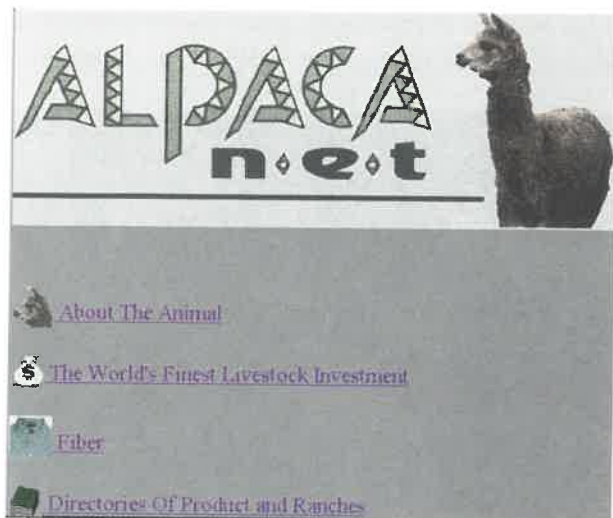


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Alpacas in Cyberspace

By John Holman



It is hard to pick up a newspaper nowadays without being reminded of the wealth of information available on the Information Super Highway, but nevertheless as a future alpaca owner, I was both surprised and pleased to come across AlpacaNet and LlamaWeb on the Internet recently.

Both are part of the World Wide Web, the collective name given to those millions of documents and pictures on the Net that are interconnected by hyperlinks. Terms such as hypertext and hyperlink may sound very exotic, but anyone who has used the Help facility of any MS Windows computer application is familiar with hyperlinks — those areas of differently coloured text which, when selected with the mouse pointer, take you immediately to another place in the document.

Browsing the WWW, with the special software usually provided with an Internet account is easy. Just clicking the mouse pointer on a heading or highlighted link in the text will fetch that link to your computer. This may be more pages of written information, a colour photograph, sound or movie clip, or even a form to fill in and electronically return. On LlamaWeb you can even vote for the cutest baby Llama of the month!

There are hundreds of colour pictures and countless pages of useful and entertaining information on AlpacaNet and LlamaWeb, from animal husbandry and veterinary links to information on feeding, housing, buying accessories, spinning fibre — you name it and it is probably there. Llama and alpaca breeders each have their own home page areas, where you can read about their farms, their experiences and, of course, their animals for sale.

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If you like to sound of an animal, just click on the link and down the phone line will come a colour photo, genetic history, even a complete family tree. You can enlarge the picture to fill your screen if you like, or immediately email the owners for more information. You can bring up a road map of how to get to the farm, and print it on your printer — the type of information is limited only by the imagination of the owner.

These individual ranch owners may or may not have an Internet Account — if not then things such as electronic mail enquiries are forwarded regularly to them by the person or organisation providing the Web service, by ordinary mail. The AlpacaNet is a commercial service, created by Lenny Charnoff, a computer consultant, and his wife Sharon McIntosh, a counsellor, who also manage Heron Ridge Alpacas. Their twins aims are to educate the public at large about

Alpacas (there are over twenty million regular Internet users at the moment, and growing — 700,000 of them in Australia), and to serve the interests of the ranch owners who subscribe to the service.

Amongst other things, subscribers to both services have their own electronic 'guest book' where visitors who drop by can leave comments or send questions. Naturally distance is irrelevant on the Net — there are enquiries from all over the world, including Indonesia, Africa and Iceland, as well as Europe, Australia and the USA. I only found one Australian breeder represented.

As you might expect, LlamaWeb is much the larger of the two, with a greater range of information and a wider range of links to other sites. It was created by Dale Graham, a molecular biologist, and her husband Tom, who keep 31 llamas of their own on a farm in Virginia.



As well as breeder areas, it has a lighter side, with a kids' page and humorous anecdotes. Its subscription rates are also very much cheaper. I actually reached AlpacaNet via a link from LlamaWeb, but Internet visitors may arrive from any direction. Net users have a huge range of index

1995 National Classic Alpaca Show and Sale

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 November

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Venue: Newmarket, the William Inglis Bloodstock Auction Complex in Randwick just 15 minutes drive from Sydney.

THE SALE

Some of the finest alpacas in Australia will be offered (approximately 30 females and 10 males).

Inspect from 9 am Sunday. Auction commences at 2 pm

THE SHOW

The show has attracted the best Australia has to offer; competition will be fierce.

Fleece judging from 10.30 am by Cameron Holt from Melbourne College of Textiles

Show judging from 11 am by Canadian, Maggie Krieger, the only woman ever to be asked to judge in Peru.

Don't miss the alpaca event of the year. Enjoy Newmarket's top facilities; meet alpaca people; see displays; browse around alpaca product stalls. For details, contact Alan Maxwell (045 761 206)

It's going to be a fabulous weekend!

(This ad sponsored by PTW Desktop & Design)

search tools at their disposal, and merely by typing in keywords such as 'alpaca', 'llama', 'ranch' – perhaps even 'cute' or 'cuddly' – an index will come up giving addresses of all sites which match.

Virtually all Web documents also contain links to related sites. For example, a Spinners Guild site will have a link to fibre growers, a Wilderness Trekking organisation may have a link to LlamaWeb because Llamas are used as pack animals, and

links will be made to and from research papers, magazines etc. (*Alpacas International* magazine is to be available on AlpacaNet shortly).

Has this short account whetted your appetite for the wonders of Netspace? The good news is that readers do not need an Internet account to view this information. All of AlpacaNet and LlamaWeb (except for the sole Australian site, which asserts copyright) has been compressed on to floppy disks, together with the neces-

sary browsing and image viewing software. All you need is a PC with MS Windows. Just send your name, address, and \$30.00 to the author at 50 Narrawong Road, South Caulfield 3162, or telephone (03) 9578 57 85 to enquire about getting your own presence on the Net.

The potential audience is virtually limitless, and it is nice to think of all those alpaca pics criss-crossing the Net, diluting all those boring Playboy centrefolds!

THE ALPACA BOOK

Management, Medicine, Biology and Fibre

Eric Hoffman and Murray E. Fowler, DVM

The *Alpaca Book* is a large format, solid book, with hard covers and stitched sections. It is written by Murray E. Fowler, DVM, professor emeritus of the Veterinary School of the University of California, Davis; and Eric Hoffman, founding president of the Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association.

Although written primarily for the North American market, the book has drawn on information and contributions from many Australians, including Gray and Jenny Morgan, Roger and Clyde Haldane, Alan Jinks, Ian Stapleton and the AAA.

The Alpaca Book covers virtually all aspects of alpacas: history, behaviour and communication; fibre; conformation; husbandry and management; reproduction; and medical management. It combines description with a 'how to' approach that Australian owners and breeders will find useful.

In the transportation section, the authors cover everything from vehicle and trailer maintenance to dealing with commercial airlines and air transport. For those transporting alpacas over long distances, the set of guides for travel makes an excellent checklist.

The section on fencing and general farm facilities follows this practical approach and will be appreciated by those who are in the process of planning or upgrading their farm.

There is interesting material on alpaca behaviour that will be of special help for newcomers to the industry. Relationships and natural hierarchies within alpaca herds are revealed and aspects of human influence on the breed discussed. Practices likely to result in problem behaviour and methods of handling of behavioural problems when they occur are part of a fascinating chapter on Behaviour and Communication.

Medical Management is a most comprehensive section. Infectious and non-infectious diseases, poisons and preventative health care are some of the topics. While much of the material is complex, the authors have employed their lucid writing style to great advantage. There are tables, illustrations and photographs as well as at-a-glance summaries.

The book contains excellent reference sections for readers requiring additional information. Where necessary, the authors have also included glossaries of terms.



*At the AOBA 1995 Annual Conference, Australians had their copies of *The Alpaca Book* signed by the authors. Top: Eric Hoffman and Sherryl Riley. Above: Pauline Nugent and Dr Murray Fowler.*

Disappointing are the layout and general production of the book. The quality of typesetting and photography is poor and labelling of some diagrams is inadequate.

Nevertheless, in terms of both depth and breadth of content and fluency of writing style, *The Alpaca Book* is probably a must for alpaca breeders.

The book is available from the Australian Alpaca Association for \$142.00 including postage and handling. (See order form page 60)



You may have missed the show... but you *can* read the book

When Joanne Rothque, Alan Cousill and Jenny Jones are *all* smiling, you just know things are going well. So it was, at the AAA Industry Seminar 'From Cria to Criation' at Deakin University, Geelong in July.

Having a good time was absolutely no reason to allow a great promotional opportunity to be neglected. Notice, dear readers, the *very* smart publication being displayed by Joanne. This contains the wisdom of all the speakers at the seminar. Those of you who attended the seminar will, no doubt, have already read your copy (every attendee received one). Those of you who didn't make it — the tip around the tracks is 'Get the book!'

There's an order form at the back of this issue. A mere \$22.00 will guarantee, not only that a copy of the 1995 AAA Seminar Proceedings will be posted to you, but also a number of hours reading that you will find both interesting and informative.

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BREEDER PROFILE

Ken and Robyn Green

Some fifteen months ago we saw our first alpacas on the ABC show 'Landline'. At that time, we were deciding what options were open to us to make the best use of our holiday house at Peppin Point on Lake Eildon in Victoria. We intend to semi retire there within the next few years and these lovely animals certainly gave us something to think about.

We both started to take more interest, trying to find out more information on alpacas and our search soon led us to Geoff and Nancy Halpin at Capalba Park in Seymour during July last year. I do not think anybody could ask for a more friendly couple to give one an introduction to alpacas.

After many hours of discussion and looking at dozens of animals, we decided on three. First, Purrumbete Amity, from whom we named our stud ('amity' meaning 'friendly relations') a really nice dark fawn female; and Faiks Grey Duchess and Grey Lord, a pair of Australian born ani-

mals, both medium grey. Both our females were pregnant and due in December and March. For the next year or two we intend to agist our alpacas until our two children are established in the university degree courses of their choice.

Robyn was doing her business plan at night school, focusing on tourism, so it was not at all difficult for her to change direction a little and add alpacas to it. This certainly created some interest among other students and teachers alike. The business plan is an excellent way of planning a future. It establishes a very clear direction and makes you aware of the costs involved in breeding and looking after the animals. Also, it's a very important document if you need to speak to your bank about borrowing funds. Even though twelve months have now passed, we have revised our business plan, keeping it active and checking that we are on target with our achievements, making adjustments where

necessary and planning for our future — at the same time, keeping abreast with opportunities.

Not being one for standing still too long, I began talking to other breeders and finding out more information. We met up with Rob and Raelene Strong of Mariah Hill and through their connections with Pat Visconti from Jolimont Alpacas, we were soon the proud owners of three, newly imported white females. Cynthia, Angelica and Renee-Anne were all pregnant and due in February and April. These three we decided to agist with the Strongs at their new property at Nar Nar Goon North.

Now for the waiting game; what will we do now? Well, that wasn't too hard. We started going to shows and field days and continued our learning experience.

At the Sheep show last year we had a chance meeting with a computer programmer from Sydney. After studying what he had to offer and looking around at what else was available, I put a proposal to him to redevelop his program as a specialist alpaca one. After some thought, he agreed to give it a go. This was the start of the 'Alpaca NoteBook'.

For the next six months we worked very hard at putting our new program together and I must thank some of our friends who have helped and given me information to study and collate into the new software. I must admit the time involved in testing and inputting information can really get away from you. Even now, with the program released, we are still testing, updating and improving all the time, but I am



Robyn, Ken with their daughter, Jacklyn who has her hands full with the one-day-old cria, 'White Lightning'.

positive it is all worthwhile as the end result is very satisfying.

We have had four births now. There are three very nice males: Chopin who is dark grey; Casper and White Lightning, both of whom are solid white. For our first female, a lovely light grey, the name Nyssa was chosen. It means, 'The Beginning'.

We sold Renee-Anne and we are using the funds for two Peruvians, when they arrive. Our last purchase was a lovely medium brown female, Satin Boots, whom we bought with a young male cria at foot. We named the cria Prancer, as he had been born on Christmas Day. All of our females are pregnant and we are playing the waiting game again. Roll on December, January, etc.

Our farm at Peppin Point has also started to undergo changes in anticipation of our move. We have had all the erosion repaired and an extra dam made in one of the gullies where the erosion had been. That fixes the problem as well as giving a good water backup for the alpacas. As well, we have planted some two hundred trees that are now starting to grow well. Already we have started fencing a few smaller paddocks, but still have a lot more to do, as we also want to fence both sides of our driveway. This is a very big job and costly.

In April this year, after a soil test, we had our block chisel ploughed, fertilised and seeded with what we hope will be a good alpaca mix of grasses. So far, the kangaroos think it's wonderful — all this sweet, new grass growing at their back door.

I still have a bit of tidying up to do around the farm, with a few fallen trees that need cutting up and stacking on the wood heap. Some more yards and mating enclosures need to be planned and built, along with some type of shed-cum-barn where we can do our shearing and store our equipment.

The future is looking very promising and we are eagerly awaiting the day we can shift to Peppin Point full time and have our alpacas with us. Maybe November next year, if everything goes to plan.

If anyone would like further information on the 'Alpaca Notebook' computer program, contact us after 7 on most nights by phone or fax on (03) 9544 6937 or mobile 018 349 421.



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The Dicksons

*A mini-profile on
the newly-elected
AAA Vice President,
Graeme Dickson and
his wife, Lynn.*

With four married children and eight grandchildren, Graeme and Lyn have 'retired' from the commercial world with the idea of enjoying their alpacas, re-acquainting themselves with their endurance horses, revisiting the golf club and spending more time with their grandchildren.

As with a number of AAA members who have 'retired', lifestyle may have changed, but it has not necessarily become slower. This year, Graeme was elected Vice President of the AAA.

Graeme was born and bred in Sydney and educated at St Patricks College in Strathfield. Graeme accepted a management cadetship and studied accounting, with a brief interruption of six months for a National Service stint with the RAAF.

Graeme's commercial career spanned a wide spectrum, with initial training in accounting and production management. Progressing to sales and marketing on a national basis with major Australian companies, he spent a considerable amount of time travelling to all Australian cities and to the Pacific Islands. About 16 years ago, Graeme felt the urge to put his experience to the test. He set up his own

company and, starting from scratch, developed an importing and distribution operation that reached an annual turnover of \$12 million.

Graeme's wife, Lyn, was also involved in the frenetic pace of corporate life, working for many years as NSW Personnel Manager for a large Australian company. They had dreamed of leaving the rat-race behind and 'doing something' apart from breeding a few horses and ponies, with their small acreage. They had investigated the possibility of deer farming. However, in 1990, Lyn started reading articles about alpacas in *Town and Country Farmer*. Receiving only lukewarm response from her husband (who hadn't read the articles), she photocopied everything she could find on alpacas and took the material along when they went for a holiday in Queensland. Capitalising on Graeme's lack of preoccupation with business matters, Lyn thrust her collection under his nose and insisted he read it. Thus began a love affair with alpacas.

They joined the Australian Alpaca Association almost four years ago. The pace of life moved from 'busy' to 'frantic' as they increased their



involvement with the AAA. They played a key role in the formation of the Hawkesbury/Blue Mountains Region, with Graeme as its first (and current) Treasurer.

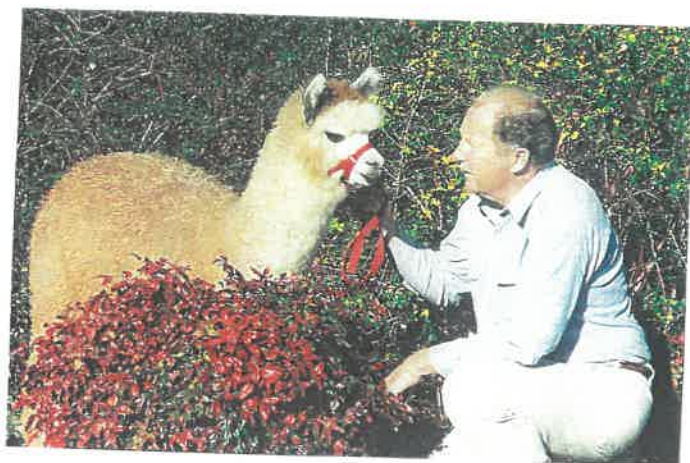
From a humble base herd of three pregnant females and with some selective selling and buying, the Dicksons now have a herd of twelve alpacas and operate as Warralinga Alpaca Stud. For the past two years, they have brought home ribbons for alpacas and fleeces from many NSW agricultural shows, include two Reserve Championships.

They recently moved from 18 acres at Kurrajong to a 25-acre property at Glossodia, near Windsor and Richmond in the Hawkesbury Valley. Here, on the outskirts of Sydney in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, they have almost completed the farm's conversion from deer to alpaca.

They see as one of the most attractive features of the fledgling alpaca industry the willingness of alpaca owners to share information and knowledge with each other. Operating within the supportive network of the Region, Warralinga has a constant stream of phone calls and visitors dropping in to talk about, look at and, Graeme comments dryly, 'generally bore the pants off anyone who isn't interested in alpacas.'

Graeme's involvement in the Association's Fibre Development Sub-committee came about as the result of encouragement by members and after lengthy discussions on the industry's future. He submitted a detailed paper outlining a system of fibre collection and marketing and has been involved in the work of the sub-committee ever since. Although his background does not directly relate to fibre, Graeme is familiar with the business of commercial spinning and weaving. His father was a pioneer in the weaving of cotton and nylon, developing a lightweight parachute webbing for the armed forces during the Second World War.

Graeme sees the alpaca industry as entering a most excit-



ing phase, with the commencement of fibre collection on a national basis. He believes that the unique properties of alpaca fibre combined with skilled Australian husbandry and management techniques; the infusion of Chilean and Peruvian genetics; and Australian fibre expertise will give Australian alpaca a special place in the world market.

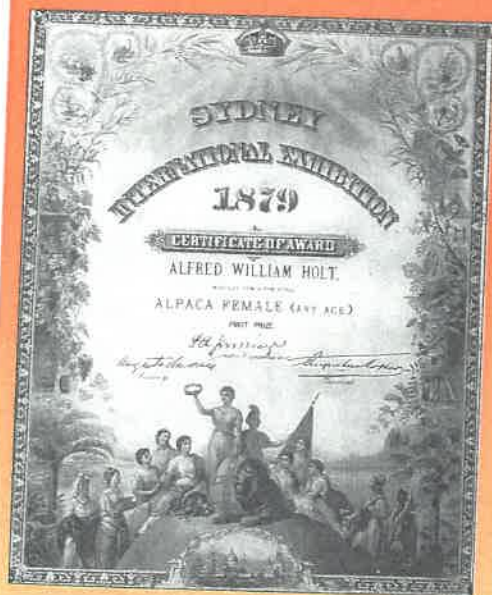
'We are now planning for the future of our industry, the same as our forefathers did with sheep some two hundred years ago, and we have all their experience to build on.'

For the Association, Graeme is a great advocate of co-ordination of effort, and fluid communication between the Association, its Regions and individual members.

On his election, he commented:

'I feel quite humble, being elected unopposed to the Vice Presidency without having first served an "apprenticeship" on the National Committee.'

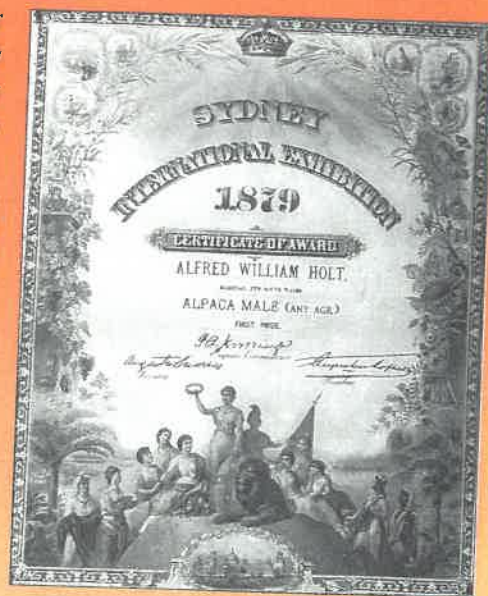
'But I can assure all members that I will approach the job with a one hundred per cent commitment to the future success of the industry — and a genuine love for these wonderful animals, alpacas.'



In November 1858, Charles Ledger landed 184 alpacas in New South Wales. By 1862, those animals not sold at auction were being given away to farmers and zoos.

These certificates were awarded to Mr Holt of Marulan. They record his success: First Prize for both best male and best female alpaca at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879. What eventually befell Alfred Holt's alpacas and any other remaining descendants of the original herd is not known.

A chance conversation led to the discovery of these dusty and forgotten certificates in a NSW antiquarium.



A Cria's Story

by **Fortunata**

*Ghost-written by Jude
Anderson, and
postscripted by Denis
Ryan, this is the story
of a difficult birth and
a fortunate life.*

Perhaps my owners should have called me 'Impatience', as I must have been in a hurry to see the wide world. Who else would choose to be born before dawn on a cold, wet southern Australian June morning? And three weeks early to boot!

I was indeed lucky to be found, perilously close to death, by Alan on his normal early morning rounds of the paddocks. Lucky? You bet! Alan and Jude had only just returned the previous day from the AOBA Conference in USA, and after that long plane flight, could hardly have been blamed if they'd had a little sleep-in. I'm glad they didn't. I think they are too.

Alan established that I was just alive, stone cold and barely breathing. I did-

n't even react to those big fingers touching my eyelids. I hadn't moved after being born.

He held me gently upside down to drain out my lungs. (They sounded more like a set of bagpipes than normal alpaca lungs.) After whisking me into the warmth of the shed and making sure I was still alive (although barely conscious), he raced back to get Jude and ring the vet.

Luckily, Denis, the vet, lives close by. He made it out to me even before Jude had boiled the kettle for the hot-water bottles. Al, by this stage was applying mouth-to-nose resuscitation as my short breaths were getting fewer and farther between. I also appreciated the warmth of the hot water bottles

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and Jeni, the farm hand, rubbing my side to get my circulation going.

At this stage, my temperature didn't even register on the digital thermometer! So things had to move very quickly. Denis hooked me up to a saline IV and the tubing ran through a bucket of lovely warm water. This really helped to warm me up on the inside while waiting for the frozen alpaca plasma to defrost (always in warm water, please; never in the microwave).

Very slowly, I regained consciousness. My eyelids started to react when touched and my breathing gradually cleared up. My mouth and feet were still very cold, though, and everyone was working hard to warm me up and dry me. Jude used a hairdryer which worked very quickly and in no time I was a small but fluffy cria. I was also snuggled up on an electric blanket (Jude and Al's bed will never be the same!) and a heat lamp was switched

on nearby. All of this was very nice, but it was really the warm plasma IV drip that saved me.

Denis now had time to check me over more thoroughly. My teeth weren't through yet. My ears were only half mast and my toenails were very soft — all the tell-tale signs of prematurity. Jude estimates that I was about 5kg, but it was hard to tell because they didn't weigh me until I'd had about one litre of fluids. I came in at 6kg that afternoon. So, from looking like one sick little girl at 7 am, by 11 am I was sitting in cush position with my brand new cria sweater on, enjoying life and wondering which one of these two-legged creatures was my mother. My mother! What had happened to her?

After the tension died down and I warmed up, they brought her in to the shed. This was a situation of save me first, worry about my mother later.

She wasn't interested in me of course. She was more worried about being locked up. Jude and Al had no trouble in milking her and I gulped down that first drink — one thing I did have was a well developed sucking reflex.

By the end of the day, I was tentatively standing up and getting around the shed, even though the tendons in my legs were loose and my front legs were quite deviated. But I was not strong enough to seek out and get a drink from mum. Jude and Al milked her every hour or so and also supplemented me with half strength Di-Vetelact.

Mum and I lived in the shed for ten days. It took me a couple of days to get enough strength to feed properly from her and someone always had to hold mum still so I could drink. I tried and tried but she would kick me away every time. Walter Bravo told Jude to rub some of mum's urine on

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Photo by Ricky Eaves

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The twins just after birth - Snugglepot and Cuddlepup. The alpaca with the bandaged leg, Cuddlepup on the left, had difficulty feeding and weighed only 4.3 kilograms.



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my head and tail. I wish I'd had my camera loaded. It was a scream watching Jude sneaking up on Mum at the poo pile with a bucket to catch it! That idea didn't work even though she sometimes got a bit clucky over me. They had rubbed some of the afterbirth on me too, on the first day. Mum smelt it, but she wouldn't stay still for me. Every time, it was the same old story — as soon as I got close to the milkbar, she pushed me away. I think it is because she's a first time mum and because I'd been taken away from her so quickly.

Never mind! I bet she'll be a great mum next year. She's spitting off the male already.

Now, I live in the nursery paddock with the expectant mums and at night I sleep in the shed. I love to pick at the grass and hay like the other alpacas and I even have a nibble at the 'brew' the girls get each morning. It took me a while, but I'm steadily putting on weight and now I'm on full strength Di-Vetelact.

If you went to the 'Cria to Criation' Seminar, you would have met me. My name is 'Fortunata'. Dr Bravo said it's a Spanish word for 'lucky'. That's me! Lucky to be alive!

Postscript

(Dr Denis Ryan, Animal House Veterinary Clinic)

The story of this cria is a wonderful example of the philosophy that it is never too late to have a go. When I first set my eyes on her it was obvious she was about to die. The clinical examination didn't do much to raise my hopes. She had a rectal temperature below 32°C (extreme hypothermia); she was low birthweight (5–5.5 kg); she was lying on her side and not moving.

I could touch her cornea and she would barely try to respond by blinking her eyelids. When I put my finger in her mouth it was like a fridge, and there was no attempt to suck at all. Her heart rate was difficult to assess because it was so faint, but it was fast and her little heart made lots of gurgly noises. The membrane colour was heading for that light shade of blue that we know spells disaster. In short, the lights were about to go out.

I was heartened only by the fact that Jude and Alan were, as always, well prepared.

We had a warmed plasma ready to go and electric blankets and bottles — even the hair-dryer! Everything was set for action. There was no point in giving the life-saving plasma any way but into the blood stream.

So there was an enormous relief when the IV catheter was happily sitting well in a jugular vein. She still hadn't budged, just made some very deathly moans. The



I always say, 'If you're feeling a bit low, a new hairdo does wonders.'



Nothing like five-star accommodation to make you feel good — things like electric blankets and heat lamps make all the difference.



Hm! Can't think what all the fuss was about, really.

catheter was super-glued to her skin. I wasn't going to lose that baby!

The first plasma was about 320 mls. We ran it in over one-and-a-half hours (remembering that her total blood volume was only about 350 to 450 mls). Making the part of the drip closest to the cria go through a warm water bath at about 40°C, meant that the fluid going in wasn't cold. While that was running, the external heating and drying system was put into action.

After about half an hour her temperature read 33°C. Hope. After an hour it read 34.5°C. Wow!

By the end of the transfusion it was 36°C and she looked alive. Her baby heart was stronger and she could suck a finger. Her colour was pink. Remarkable stuff, plasma.

I switched her to a fluid drip with some glucose in it and gave her some other bits and pieces, which probably were incidental to the plasma and the

warming therapy. We knew the plasma had not got enough IgG to give her what she needed for the challenges ahead, because we had already measured its concentration. So, a few hours later we gave her a second one. Now she was sitting up, but my precious catheter was still running. Her temperature was up to 37°C and still going.

She looked great — in comparison, that is, to when we had started. The moan had been replaced by a rather normal cria cry.

The second plasma was given through the same drip line over a similar time. She had even passed urine, at this stage. (The next day we measured her IgG. She had only received about 70 ml of colostrum. Her IgG was 21.6 g/l which is more than acceptable).

She was on the drip for about five hours. Her temperature was up to 38°C (normal); it was time to pull the

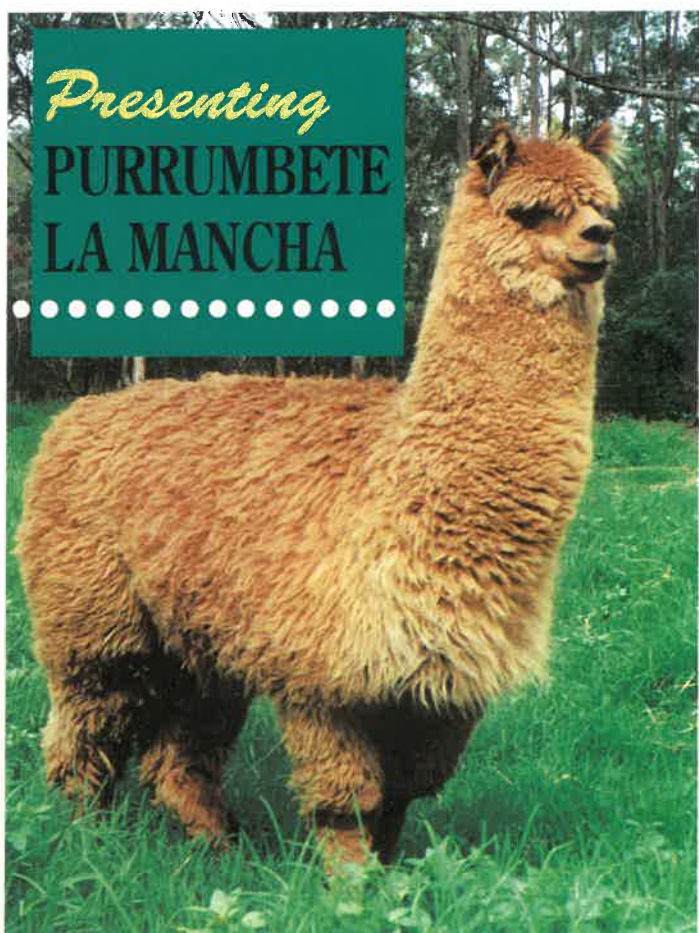


Fortunata at 2 days old.

catheter. It was surprising how quickly she got to her feet.

The problem now was mum and bonding — but you've read about that earlier.

*The moral of the story is very clear,
To all you breeders far and near.
If you have a 'prem' or even a caesar,
You'd better have plasma in your freezer.*



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Dural Alpaca Park

Letter TO THE EDITOR

John Sturzaker's letter is an interesting one and I see nothing wrong with his logic. For the benefit of those who haven't read his letter, John points out that a future producer with 1,000 animals of twelve colours and four fleece qualities will average only 83 kg of wool per type and colour, not enough to fill bales of 100 or 120 kg.

I don't see this as a problem that will doom alpacas to cottage industry status for, perhaps, three reasons:

1. On-farm storage for only one year will enable the farmer to easily fill a bale of each type. John alludes to this in a way that suggests that it is a problem in Peru. It may be for all I know, but does it have to be so here? Most farms I know have more than enough storage space to cope with twelve half-full bales.
2. Alpaca farmers aren't forced to have the full range of colours in their flock. The simple expedient of halving the number of colours, i.e. by selling off those coloured animals he doesn't want, will immediately give him enough wool to fill his bales every year.
3. Storing the wool 'on-animal', i.e. shearing every two years,

may be another way around it. However this generally will increase the amount of foreign matter in the fleece and the wool tips are exposed to the weather to the weather for another year. I presume that a loss of value would result.

It would seem that the wide range of natural colours that alpacas exhibit is a virtue that should be fostered in this day and age when people are becoming increasingly worried about the chemical bombardment to which we are all subjected. I understand that after years of fixing the colour white, Peru is now banning the export of coloured animals because they perceive that naturally coloured wool has value.

In view of all the foregoing, it would seem then, that the individual breeders should concentrate on one or two colours only, precisely because of the multitude of wool lots produced. Currently, the difficulty with a small, many-coloured flock is that one needs a sire for each colour of hembra in the flock. For a small breeder, this is impossibly expensive.

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1995 CLASSIC SHOW AND SALE AT NEWMARKET

Vice President, Graeme Dickson, believes this will be the largest Alpaca Classic Show and Sale ever conducted in Australia.

'We are very pleased to have Newmarket as our venue this year. It's the first time we have run this event in Sydney and we wanted Newmarket because it is a convenient venue and one that offers all the facilities we need. The sale ring is spectacular; the stabling facilities are the best in Australia and the complex's rural setting is going to make our alpacas feel very much at home.'

On Saturday morning at 10.30, the first fleece classes will be judged in the circular dining room. At 11 am, the first animals will be in the sale ring.

After lunch, both fleece and animal judging will continue until 5.30 when cocktails will be served. At 6 pm, Championship Classes will be judged.

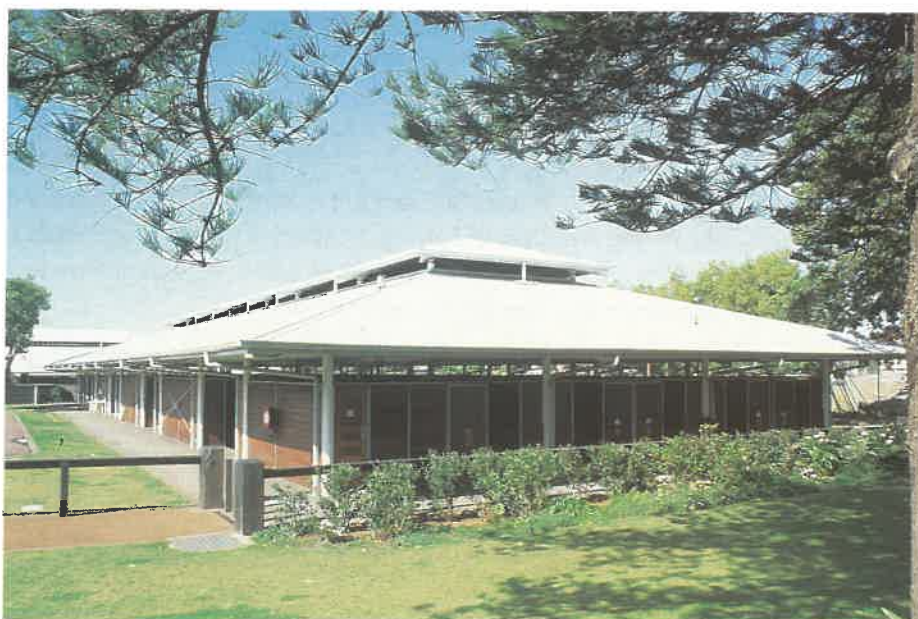
Mrs Maggie Krieger will judge the animals. A Canadian with extensive judging experience in North America, Maggie is the only woman ever to

have been invited to judge in Peru. A member of the American Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association she is also an author of books and videos on alpaca fibre characteristics and conformation.

Judging the fleeces will be

Cameron Holt, from the Melbourne College of Textiles.

Prize money will be more than double that of last year and the Association is extremely grateful to all those companies and studs that have supported the Show.



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On Saturday night, a dinner dance will be held at the complex. AAA members, friends and visitors are invited to enjoy a night of fine food, dancing and entertainment.

The Sale

From 9 o'clock on Sunday morning all the sale animals will be on display for inspection and intending buyers will be able to register.

At 10.30, the pre-auction parade will introduce each animal.

Buyers will again have the opportunity to inspect individual animals until 1.15 pm when live music will precede a gala fashion parade of alpaca garments.

The auction will commence at 2 pm.

It is expected that over 30 animals will be offered for sale, including unjoined and pregnant females, females with cria at foot, weanlings

and some stud quality male alpacas. All facilities will be offered to prospective buyers, including interstate and overseas telephone bidding.

Wesfarmers Dalgety are the auctioneers. Joining their Sydney team will be their most experienced alpaca auctioneer, Andrew Sloane, whom the company will fly in from Melbourne.

The Newmarket complex in Randwick is only 15 minutes drive from Sydney and close to the beach. The complex has excellent facilities, including a bar and light refreshment area. There's good accommodation close by, including the Ramada Hotel overlooking Bondi Beach and the Holiday Inn at Coogee Beach. During the week-end there will be

alpaca garments on display and for sale as well as plenty of information from the Association's stall for those interested in finding out more about the alpaca industry.

Auction catalogues are available from Wesfarmers/Dalgety's Andrew Sloan, phone 018 522 204.

Members should watch their mail boxes, as a complementary sale catalogue will be posted to each AAA stud in October.



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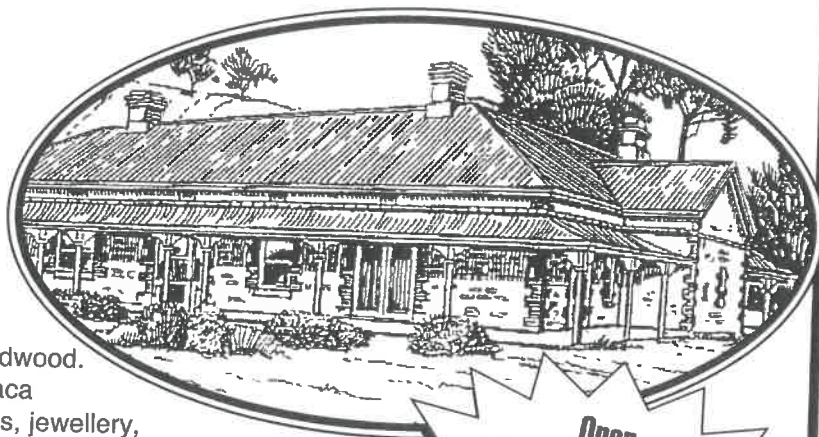
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THE ENIGMATIC SURI

.....
by Cherie Bridges

Although there's much unknown about suris, there are many pieces of anecdotal information that point towards some interesting possibilities.

In researching this article, I find one thing particularly clear — suris are an enigma! What's exciting about that is that in Australia, we can be at the forefront of suri research and development, even though, at this stage our research is more 'anecdotal' than scientific. The patchy data available on suris in South America is contradictory and some of it is at odds with breeders' experiences here.

There seems to be general agreement that one type of alpaca did not evolve from the other. Suris and huacayas are assumed to have developed separately.

'Notwithstanding the fact that the suri and huacaya varieties have been bred in complete promiscuity for several centuries, it is true that each has kept its ethnic features perfectly defined and differentiated.' (*Animal Breeding and Production of American Camelids*, Rigoberto Calle Escobar)

So, where did the so-called Chili type come from? ('Chili' is a term developed in the U.S., not used in South America, to describe a fleece type within the huacaya — a soft, less densely fleeced animal with little or no

crimp.) No one seems to know, but it would appear *not* to be from crossing of suris and huacayas (see later from interviews with breeders on the results of such crossings).

No exact figures are available, but we know that suris make up less than ten per cent of the world alpaca population. The suri is more vulnerable to extreme cold than the huacaya as its back line is more exposed; so it is less suitable to the barren highlands of Peru where it has no protection from snow, rain and wind. This could explain its low numbers proportionate to total alpaca herds.

'The suri will prosper if it is brought down from the barren highland zones to the lower zones where the climate is more benign and the results will be satisfactory.' (*Animal Breeding and Production of American Camelids*, Rigoberto Calle Escobar)

There is no mistaking a suri alpaca (except, perhaps, after shearing). Suris are slightly smaller and finer boned, weighing 10 to 20 per cent less than huacayas and their fleece is made up of defined pencil-thin staples. The wool naturally parts along the back line



Suri stud, 'Condor Gold' of Paul Carney's Lake Plains Alpacas, South Australia.

and falls towards the ground, unlike that of the huacaya whose wool grows straight out from the body. On some suris, the fibre hangs straight; on others, each staple has a curl similar to that of an angora goat. The fibre has a strong sheen and is very silky to the touch. The staple length is long — around 6 to 8 inches in the first year. Breeding females grow a staple of about four to six inches a year with that of males generally longer.

Opinions differ as to the suri's aesthetic appeal. Some, whose eyes are attuned more to the teddy-like huacaya, do not like the look of the suri. Others find it has a more enigmatic beauty and love the look of the lustrous fleece that ripples as the animal moves.

But, beauty aside, where do the suris fit in the alpaca industry? I interviewed the breeders with the larger herds in Australia and the U.S. to find out.

What attracts people to Suris?

There are only around 160 suris (males, females and cria) in Australia at present, and about 500 in the United States.

The Australian suris have come from a 1992 Chilean/New Zealand importation that contained about 30. The rest have been imported from the U.S. and bred up. Without exception, breeders I spoke to were initially attracted to suris because of their visual impact.

Paul Carney, of Lake Plains Alpaca Stud in South Australia, was stunned when he saw photos of a Peruvian suri herd and had to have some. Paul is a neuro-surgeon in one life and an alpaca farmer in another. He already had huacayas. Further investigation convinced him suris would be a good investment because of their rarity. He bought his suris from the New Zealand shipment and now has 14.

Wendy Billington of Cedar House


Alpacas was also an established huacaya breeder when she first saw suris. Wendy loved their fleece lustre and the sight of a group of suris moving together in full fleece initiated her desire to own a herd. She now owns one of the largest herds in Australia with thirty-five. She initially bought several from the New Zealand shipment and, more recently, has imported a group from the U.S. that are currently in quarantine on her farm near

Bowral in New South Wales. Wendy is convinced that the rarity of the suri makes them a good long term investment.

Jill Short, of AST Alpacas and Surilana Alpaca Stud went a step further than most with her vision for suris. She and husband, Martin Ruzicka, formed an alpaca syndicate based solely on suris and convinced business investors to make a five-year investment commitment to their project.

BONNIE VALE ALPACAS

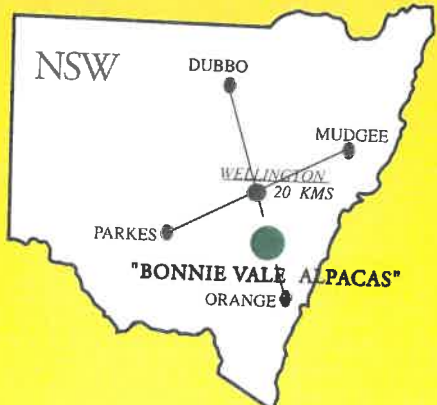
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They manage their 30 suris and ten huacayas on a farm in Tylden, Victoria. Jill feels that huacayas usually have more instant appeal with people because of their cuteness. But for Jill to get a dose of the 'warm fuzzies', nothing can beat the sight of her paddock of suris running towards her, their fleeces rippling like a wheatfield.

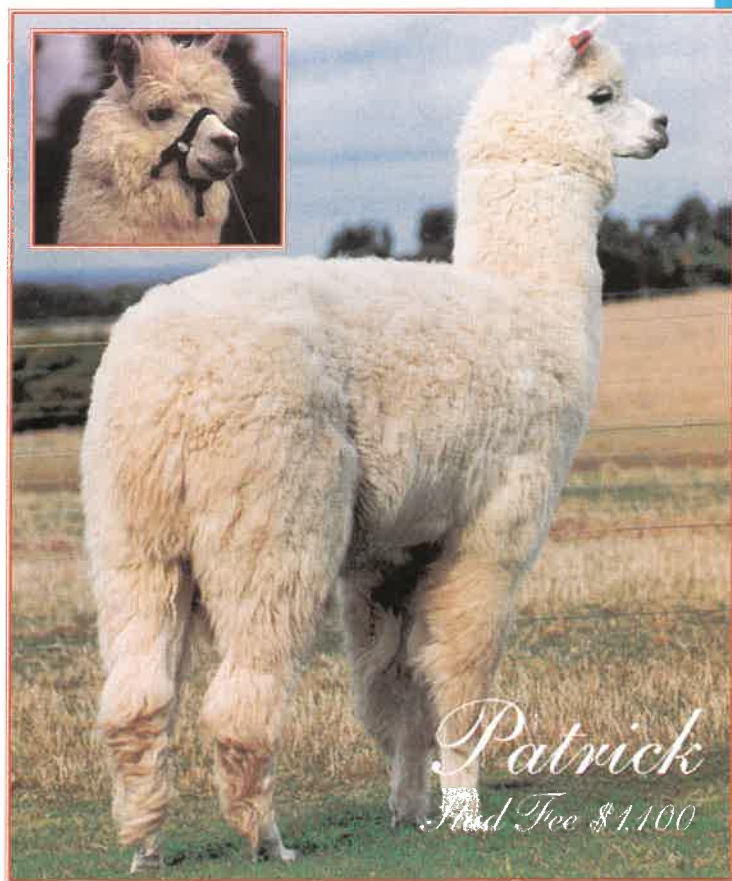
Andy and Cheryl Tillman of Bolivian Suri Alpacas in Oregon U.S.A. had great success with llama breeding (Andy still holds the record for obtaining top prices at llama auctions). In 1993, they took on the management and promotion of a herd of suris; they have eighty. Animal health and care is the responsibility of Cheryl who is a vet. Andy and Cheryl are in the process of importing 350 alpacas and 50 llamas from Bolivia into the U.S. Forty per cent of these alpacas are suris. All the suris are pre-sold and Cheryl says they 'went like hot cakes'. Suris have been somewhat of a 'sleep-

er' in the U.S. alpaca industry, but in the last twelve months interest and demand have grown dramatically.

Roger Haldane, a well-known pioneer of the Australian alpaca industry, likes the look of good quality suris, but is committed to breeding them for more practical stud breeding and farming reasons. Roger has had a fluctuating herd size in suris, depending on sales. He has 20 at present and intends to breed up to the point where his alpaca herd is 50/50 huacaya/suri. The appeal for Roger was the uniformity of suri fleece which, long term, means easier classing in the shearing shed. Whereas, after skirting, the huacayas



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have their fleeces separated into saddles, necks, legs and bellies, the suris' entire fleeces can be put into one grade at the first shearing and one or two grades (depending on the animal) at subsequent shearings. Roger also believes it is a faster process to breed a standard line flock in suris than in huacayas as there is not as much variation in genetic type.

This is a view supported by Chris Tuckwell, Senior Livestock Officer, Department of Primary Industries (South Australia). Chris produced a study tour report for the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation on the Peruvian alpaca industry.

Motivated by the feel of the fibre and the declining world population of suris, Chris believes suris are well worth more consideration than they are currently receiving. From his Peruvian observations, Chris surmises that the suri represents a truer genetic type than does the huacaya.

Consequently selective breeding will improve the line faster. Being of good scientific mind, he is quick to point out that this is speculation and not based on scientific research.

Health and Management

Despite the difficulties for suris in the extremely harsh environment of the Peruvian highlands, they are flourishing in Australia and America. Chris Tuckwell says the difference between climatic conditions where the animals live in Peru and any part of Australia is dramatic, with weather conditions here much milder. Having a more open fleece,



Suris bred by Roger Haldane — a pioneer of the Australian alpaca industry.

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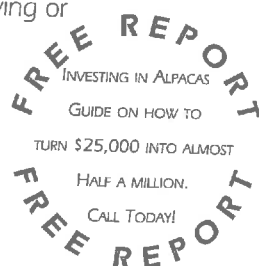
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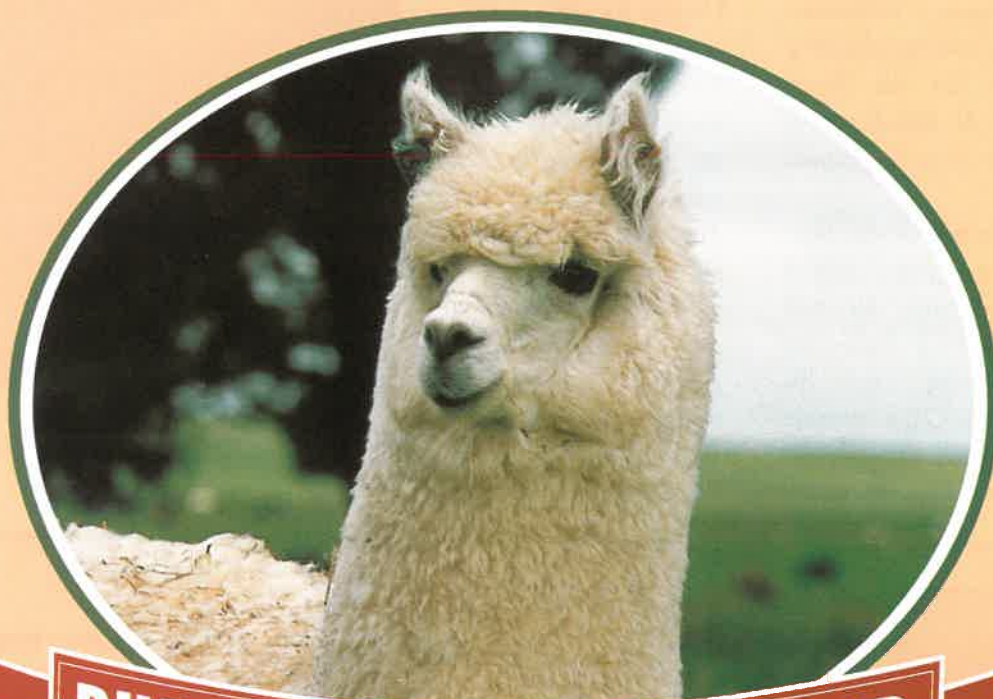
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the suris are more heat tolerant than the huacayas, but more attention needs to be paid to them in cold and, particularly, wet conditions. Crias born in wet winters will feel the effects of the cold more than huacayas, as they can get wet to the skin.

Tylden, in Victoria, is very cold, wet (40+ inches) and frosty in winter. Jill Short says her suris have come through two winters just fine, but they do have access to a large, cosy shed. They are fed in there to encourage them to take shelter at night.

Cheryl Tillman in Oregon says they have low rainfall (12 inches) but cold winter days that can be well below freezing point. The suris do well. They are not locked up, but have access to three-sided shelters bedded with straw. They do not have any winter births with any of their animals as a planned, labour-saving strategy. Their summers are very hot, but they have had no heat stress problems. I

asked for her comments as a vet on the suris' health and management. She said they are hardy, have good fertility, better overall milk production, easy birthing and good IgG levels in the cria.

None of the breeders had experienced any significant problems with their suris and several commented that their fertility rate, appeared better than that of the huacayas. On average, suri males have larger testicles than huacayas and are generally very vigorous performers, even in a paddock situation. Females conceive quickly (Wendy Billington says most of hers conceive on the first mating) and hold pregnancies well.

Bill Barnett (Washington, USA) farmed a large llama and huacaya herd for several years before importing suris from Bolivia. Bill is a vet and quickly noticed a difference in the suris' fertility rates. He took blood samples from his pregnant huacayas and suris and

found the suris ran, on average, a considerably higher progesterone level. Again, it must be pointed out that these are anecdotal reports. No published trial work exists on comparisons.

To Cross Or Not To Cross

This was a fascinating part of the research for me. Several weeks ago, I would have argued against putting suri males over huacaya females (with the exception of distinct Chili types). I guess this was because of taking a purist line and fear of unknown genetics. I must declare a pecuniary interest, at this point. I do have a quarter share in three suri males who stand at stud. My feeling was that they would be best mated to suri females and Chili types. As a result of interviewing for this article, I am going to put a suri male over several of my huacayas. Every breeder I spoke to has tried it with positive results. You be the judge.

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Suris and huacayas are different from other animals such as goats, sheep, cattle, horses, dogs etc, where crossing of different breeds within the species produces something in between. For example, if you cross an angora and a cashmere, both fibre producing goats, you will get a cashgora. It has some qualities from each of the two breeds. This is not what happens when you cross a suri and huacaya alpaca. The genetic type is fixed and you get either one or the other. (See earlier, Escobar.)

Paul Carney took the decision to break new ground and put his suri sires over all thirty of his huacaya females. Twenty of them have dropped so far. Ten of the cria are suris and ten are huacayas. All are totally true to type and indistinguishable from crias with both parents of the same type.

Wendy Jones and Tony Fitzner manage Paul's alpaca herd. They have a strong animal background, mainly in the angora goat industry. Consequently, they are particularly fleece conscious.

Wendy was happy to share her suri observations. In comparing the huacaya cria this year (out of suri sires) with the huacaya cria last year (out of

huacaya sires) she says that this year's batch have fleece with an improved handle that is definitely silkier to the touch.

Jill Short has two huacaya cria out of suri/suri matings. (This seems to happen in about five to ten per cent of suri/suri breedings.) They have the best fleece of all her huacayas. Jill recently had a noted sheep and fleece judge evaluate her alpacas. These two were selected as having exceptional handle. Jill says they are totally true-to-type huacayas, but there is added lustre and silkiness in the fleece.

The Hamilton family also has a

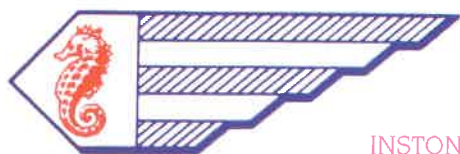
white Peruvian-looking huacaya male that they have selected for stud with very dense well-crimped fleece with a lovely silky handle. He is the result of a suri/suri breeding.

Jill Short has put suri males over six of her huacayas, her goal being to either produce suris or improve the fleece quality of the huacayas. The huacayas are yet to drop and Jill awaits the results with great anticipation.

Jill and Martin are committed to breeding true suris, but also believe there is a strong case for using suri males over plainer quality huacayas who may not have produced great cria



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in the past. They believe you can't lose. If they get a suri, that's great! It's valuable and suri numbers need to increase. If they get a huacaya, they believe the suri will add sheen and silkiness to the fleece handle.

This opinion is shared by Wendy Billington. Wendy has the results of five suri/huacaya matings on her property.

1. *Chili type female* (previous cria poor quality huacayas, no crimp) threw excellent suri.
2. *Brown huacaya female*, mated to fawn suri male threw black suri female.
3. *Brown huacaya female*, mated to fawn suri male threw white suri female.
4. *Average quality huacaya female* had previously thrown a suri cria (when mated to suri). Mated again to suri, this time produced excellent type white huacaya male.
5. *Dense, good type brown huacaya female*, with fawn undercarriage, had only produced brown cria when mated to fawn huacaya). Mated to fawn suri male, she produced a fawn huacaya, true-to-type, with silky handling fleece.

Wendy considers her matings a great success and will do more suri/huacaya matings. I was particularly interested to hear about her black suri.

The Peruvians prize their coloured suris greatly and it is very difficult to export them. Perhaps the only way we will get any numbers of coloured suris is through huacaya crossings. Most of the suris in Australia are white, with a few fawns.

One of my worries about crossing had been that if you got a huacaya male from a suri sire, wouldn't that huacaya male, if used for breeding, sometimes throw a suri?

It's too early for anyone to answer that (although the aforementioned Hamilton male has so far over 20 cria

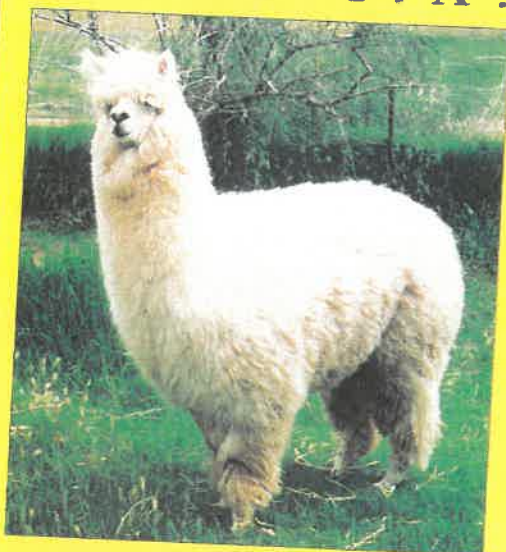
on the ground, all true-to-type huacayas). However, what the breeders did say is, if it does happen, that's great. Suris are a valuable commodity. If you do not want to breed them yourself, you will have no difficulty selling them — so no problem is caused if the odd suri pops up in a huacaya herd.

The biggest surprise for me was during my interview with Roger Haldane. Because he is a traditional

large-scale farmer as well as an enterprising alpaca farmer, I expected Roger to say crossing was a 'no-no'. On the contrary, Roger said that he will be putting suri males, when released (he has some in quarantine), over lower grade and Chili type huacayas. He believes we need to get numbers of suris up and he would like to breed colour into the suris.

He has one mating result from a white suri male over a black huacaya

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female. He didn't get black, but got a lovely dark fawn suri cria.

With the advent of alpacas from Peru, pressure may be on some Chilean huacayas in terms of quality. Some of the plainer females have not shown themselves likely to throw an excellent cria. Perhaps putting suri males over them may be worth a one-year experiment.

Wendy Billington says that she knows that such females in her herd will only produce wether quality males, so she has nothing to lose. If they throw a suri, she is ahead. If they throw a huacaya, she is confident that the fleece handle will be improved without any compromise in type.

Suri Fleece

So, what's the difference once the fleece comes off the animal?

In Peru, the home of the alpaca fleece industry, suri fleece is sorted, purchased and processed separately to that of huacayas.

Inca Tops, the largest processors of alpaca fibre in Peru, currently pay almost 50 per cent more per kilo for raw suri fleece than for first shearing huacaya and 3.8 times the price for suri over coarse alpaca.

As the suri yields, on average, the same fleece weight as a huacaya, there is a high long term commercial advantage.

Roger Haldane believes that suris have even greater potential to increase fleece weights than the huacaya and cites the example of angora goats that produce twice as much weight of fleece in relation to their own body weight as sheep. This is an interesting hypothesis and, if proven, will mean excellent returns for suri breeders.

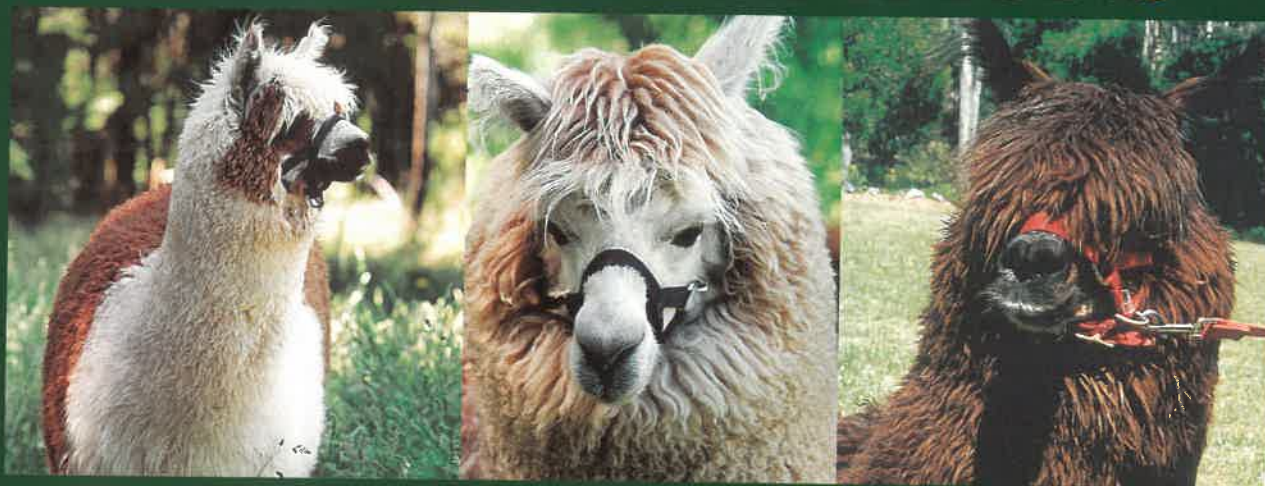
The suri fibre end product is used for different purposes to that of huacaya — mostly high fashion fabrics with sheen.

I bought a bolt of black cloth in the U.S. last year that was 100 per cent suri, to have made into a coat. It cost an arm and a leg, but was irresistible. I had seen a photo in a German fashion magazine of the same fabric in a fur-like glamorous coat with a beautiful sheen that the light just bounced off.

With a world-wide trend away from furs, suri is a great alternative and so much nicer for the animal to be shorn rather than skinned.

Personally, I think that, regardless of individual taste, it's terrific to have options in the alpaca industry; room for diversification and experimentation and a guarantee of our long-term success in producing 'The Fibre of the Gods' in Australia.

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MIKE SAFLEY TO JUDGE AT VIC CENTRAL REGION'S THIRD ANNUAL EXPO

The success of the previous events, is responsible for the relocation of this year's Annual Expo. The venue for 1995 will be the Oaklands Junction Stud Stock Complex, near Tullamarine in Victoria. The Expo will be held on Sunday 22 October.

A feature of the Expo will be the auction of a limited group of outstanding alpacas. All serious breeders looking to increase their animal numbers will find an opportunity here. Dalgety's will be the selling agents.

Central Region is delighted to have secured the services of Mike Safley as Show judge for the Expo. Mike has contributed to *Alpacas Australia* on a number of occasions and is well known to members of both the Australian and American alpaca industries. He lives in Hillsboro, Oregon, and is a partner with his father in Northwest Alpacas.

Vic Central Region is hoping for good weather so that judging will be able to be held outside on the lawns of the complex. In the event that the weather is unsuitable, audience and competitors will be made comfortable inside, with judging conducted on the stage that will be specially extend-

ed so that larger classes can be accommodated.

Always innovative, Vic Central Region is introducing two new classes this year.

The first is a Breeder's Production Class, for two animals bred by a single breeder. The second is a Novice Class for those who have not yet won a First Prize at any show.

Guest speakers, trade stalls and displays will also be part of the very entertaining Expo day planned by the Region.

Prospective alpaca buyers will find plenty to interest them in the Alpaca Sale.

Members of the public who may be interested to see the Show and find out more about these amazing animals will also be made very welcome.

Anyone who would like further details should contact Jane Szigethy, phone or fax (054) 270 375.



Mike Safley



Wyona Solo - 1st over 2 y.o. Male

Wyona Chipper - Reserve Champion Male 1st

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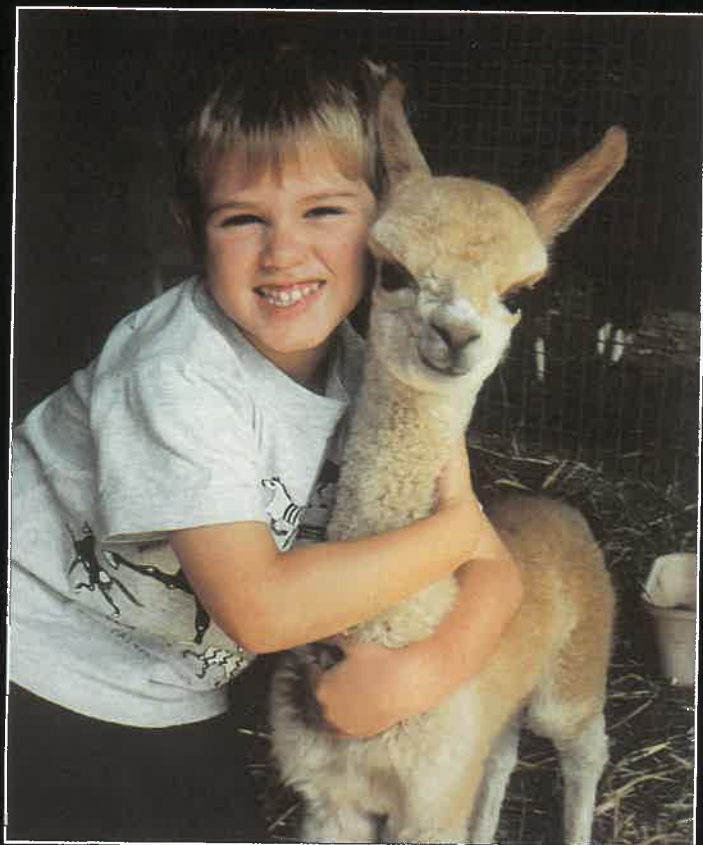
P A C A *Pics*



Pic of the Pack

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AST Alpacas, Jill Short



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.....
by Dr A.J. O'Shea BVSc, Camden Veterinary Clinic

Mating alpacas

Having recently attended the AAA conference in Geelong, I thought it would be worthwhile discussing some of the information gleaned.

It has become obvious that some current mating techniques are damaging the uterus unnecessarily.

Guest speaker, Dr Walter Bravo showed some post-mortem photographs of hembra uteri. These females had been mated multiple times and significant damage was present.

Discussion centred around the best way to mate and achieve pregnancy with the minimum amount of damage to

the uterus. This is essential to maximise both the short-term conception rate and the long-term fertility of the hembra. Measures taken to encourage long-term fertility means the hembra should be able to produce cria well into middle and, possibly, into old age

The current recommendations are:

- 1 Paddock mating is preferable. This way, the macho will only mate the hembra when she is ready.
- 2 Mating should occur once. One mating will lead to ovulation. More matings will not increase ovulation.



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- 3 There is some benefit in a second mating twenty-four hours after the initial mating to increase the amount of semen present in the uterus. This is of benefit in about 30 per cent of animals whose ovulation occurs a little later.
- 4 The hembra should be tested seven days later and again at fourteen days to detect hembras at the declining stage of the follicular wave.

Other information that was of great interest concerned when to mate the hembra after delivery. The most common practice is to mate her as soon as she will accept the macho (usually seven to ten days after). The evidence presented suggested that, although the ovaries have recovered sufficiently at seven days, the uterus has not recovered until twenty-one to thirty days. Consequently, the advice is to mate a hembra about three weeks after delivery. Otherwise, if the embryo comes down into an unhealthy uterus, it will most probably be slipped.

The remaining information of interest concerns when to mate a young hembra. We should be aiming to have young females at 55 kgs in weight by eleven months of age. At this stage 70 per cent of these will be fertile and will probably become pregnant. The remaining 30 per cent will take anywhere until 22 months to develop fully and become pregnant. This is normal in healthy young alpacas.



Dr Walter Bravo emphasises a point at the AAA Industry Seminar at Deakin University, Geelong in July. A keynote speaker, Dr Bravo gave papers on both male and female alpaca reproduction.

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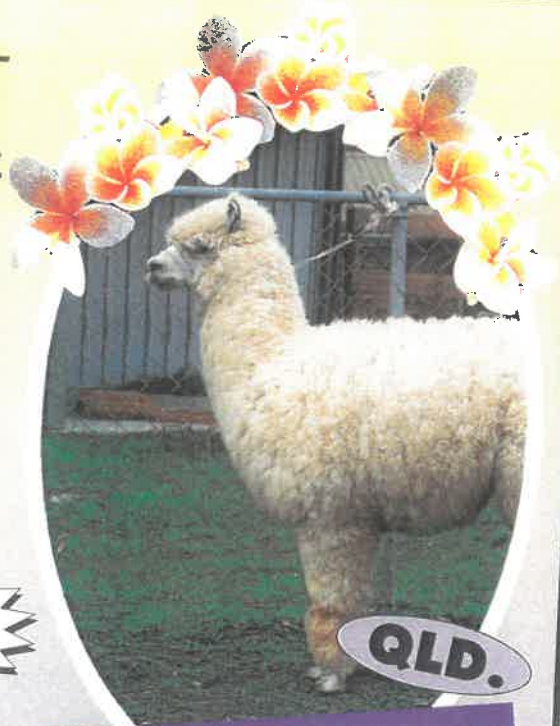
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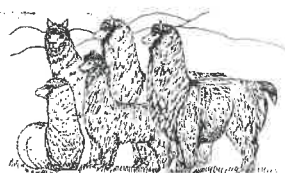
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This issue's great line up appears on pages 50-51

Acknowledgements

As usual there are a number of people who have been of great assistance in putting together this issue of *Alpacas Australia*.

In particular, we are grateful for contributions of photographs from Philippa Ernst, Janie Hicks and Jude Anderson. Thanks also to Christine Nicolas of Pengelly Alpaca Stud, who provided our cover photograph. In response to our phone call, she drove from Kyneton to our office, bringing us a number of excellent photographs. Our only difficulty was deciding which one to use!

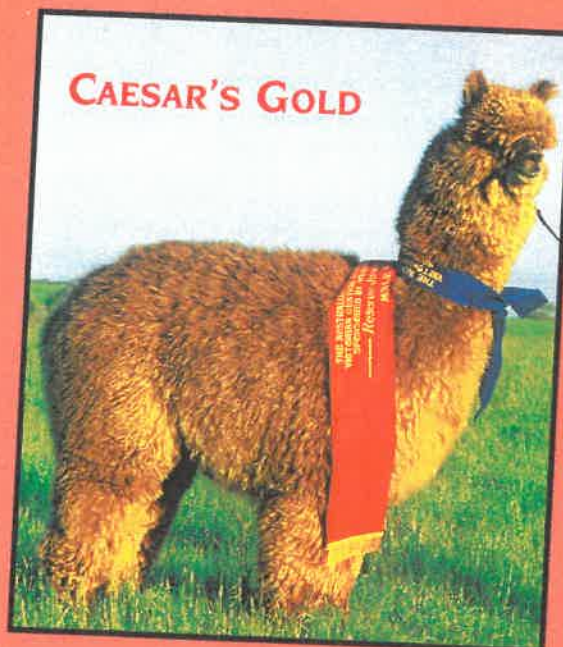
There were many articles submitted for publication — too many for this issue. They have provided the basis of December's magazine, but we'll certainly need more. If you have a story you'd like to share with our readers, please send it in. Listed on page 59 are copy deadlines for all issues to the end of 1996.

We would like more short articles. They help increase our topic range and provide useful breaks between longer stories. If you have a good picture to go with the text, all the better.

Remember, too, that we would like to hear your points of view on matters affecting the industry. Our 'Letters to the Editor' column is your forum for opinions and discussions. Why not have *your* say?



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AAA NOTES

.....
contributed by Ken Alston

There is never a dull moment in the alpaca industry.

In June, the first seminar since the inaugural seminar in 1991 was held in Victoria, at Deakin University in Geelong. It was acclaimed as a great success. Of special significance was the launch of the Australian Alpaca Mark

The National Committee recently met in Sydney for the first all-weekend meeting. This gave the time, not only for the management of day-to-day affairs but also to address future policy.

AOBA

International issues steadily become more interesting. We have an excellent relationship with the American Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) that keeps us well informed

about any problems with the only other worthwhile alpaca register.

Moves to tighten import standards

The AOBA has become aware that its overall standards for acceptance of imports from South America are not sufficiently stringent. With the backing of a very high proportion of their members, they propose to substantially improve these standards.

'Private' quarantine

A new departure in the USA is to use privatised quarantine entry points to supplement the facilities of the world standard facility at Key West, Florida. This move is not popular with AOBA members.

Pressure for additional offshore quarantine

Our members will know that a protocol has recently been signed with Peru. In addition to quarantine time in Peru, animals will need to be held at the Cocos Island quarantine station for a full year instead of the previously shorter period. As this will restrict the number of animals being passed through per year, there is general pressure to have an additional offshore island as a second entry quarantine.

The Federal Quarantine Authority (AQIS) has circulated a discussion paper defining the basic requirements. Cocos Island has a high reputation and any new facility must meet its standards. The Pacific Ocean has innumerable islands, but few will meet the obvious requirements.

AAA President, Gray Morgan, was presented with the original Australian Alpaca Mark in its three versions by the members of the Fibre Research and Development Sub-committee (from left, top): Roger Haldane, Gray Morgan, Philippa Ernst; (below): Chris Williams and Graeme Dickson.

National Office dealing with registrations

Over the last four years the Association and ABRI have continued to improve the registration procedures that are a corner-stone of our industry. We are striving to be even more professional.

With a strong team, the National Office is taking more responsibility for this process. It is now a requirement that all registrations, transfers, certification and import paperwork be sent initially to the National Office. After checking, the National Office will forward the material to ABRI for data base entry. All enquiries should be directed to the National Office. Cheers!



EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING DEADLINES 1995 and 1996

The following are deadlines for the submission of editorial and advertising material for the remaining 1995 issue of Alpacas Australia and for the four 1996 issues.

Issue 13 — Summer
Due: December 1995
Deadline: Friday 20 October

Issue 14 — Autumn
Due: March 1996
Deadline: Friday 19 January

Issue 15 — Winter
Due: June 1996
Deadline: Friday 19 April

Issue 16 — Spring
Due: September 1996
Deadline: Friday 19 July

Issue 17 — Summer
Due: December 1996
Deadline: Friday 18 October

Editorial

(including 'Letters to the Editor')

Please mark all editorial contributions to the attention of Carol Hosking.

If possible, all editorial contributions should be typed. Visual material can be colour photographs or transparencies. We will endeavour to return all photos and slides.

Advertising

Please mark all advertising material to the attention of Joy Vellios.

Rates and specifications are available on request. We can accept camera ready material or will produce advertising material to specification.

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30 SEPTEMBER–7 OCTOBER

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2 OCTOBER

Strathalbyn Show, SA

Alpaca judging. Contact Denise Moysey (08) 391 3270.

13-15 OCTOBER

Gosford Show, NSW

Alpacas on display. Judging Sunday. Contact Wayne Clymo, after hours only on phone/fax: (043) 621 804.

15 OCTOBER

Annual General Meeting Eastern Region, Vic

At 'Montrose Town Centre' at 10 am. Contact Lyla Fisher (059) 985 245.

22 OCTOBER

Kyneton Alpaca Expo Vic Central Region

To be held at Oaklands Junction Stud Stock Complex. See page 49 for more details

29 OCTOBER

Alpaca Extravaganza Vic Eastern Region

Premier show and auction, displays at trade stalls at KCC Park, Dandenong-Hastings Road, Lyndhurst. Contact Bill Plunkett: (03) 9437 1534.

6 NOVEMBER

Gala Dinner Vic Eastern Region

Presentation dinner for \$1,000 fleece competition and presentation of the Alpaca of the Year award. Contact Bill Plunkett (03) 9437 1534.

10-11 NOVEMBER

Albany Agricultural Show, WA

Alpaca judging Friday 10 November from 10 am. Enquiries to Laurie Binks (098) 409 262

18 NOVEMBER

Lilydale Show, Vic

Commencement of Alpaca of the Year' competition (open to all regions). For further information, contact Bill Plunkett: (03) 9437 1534.

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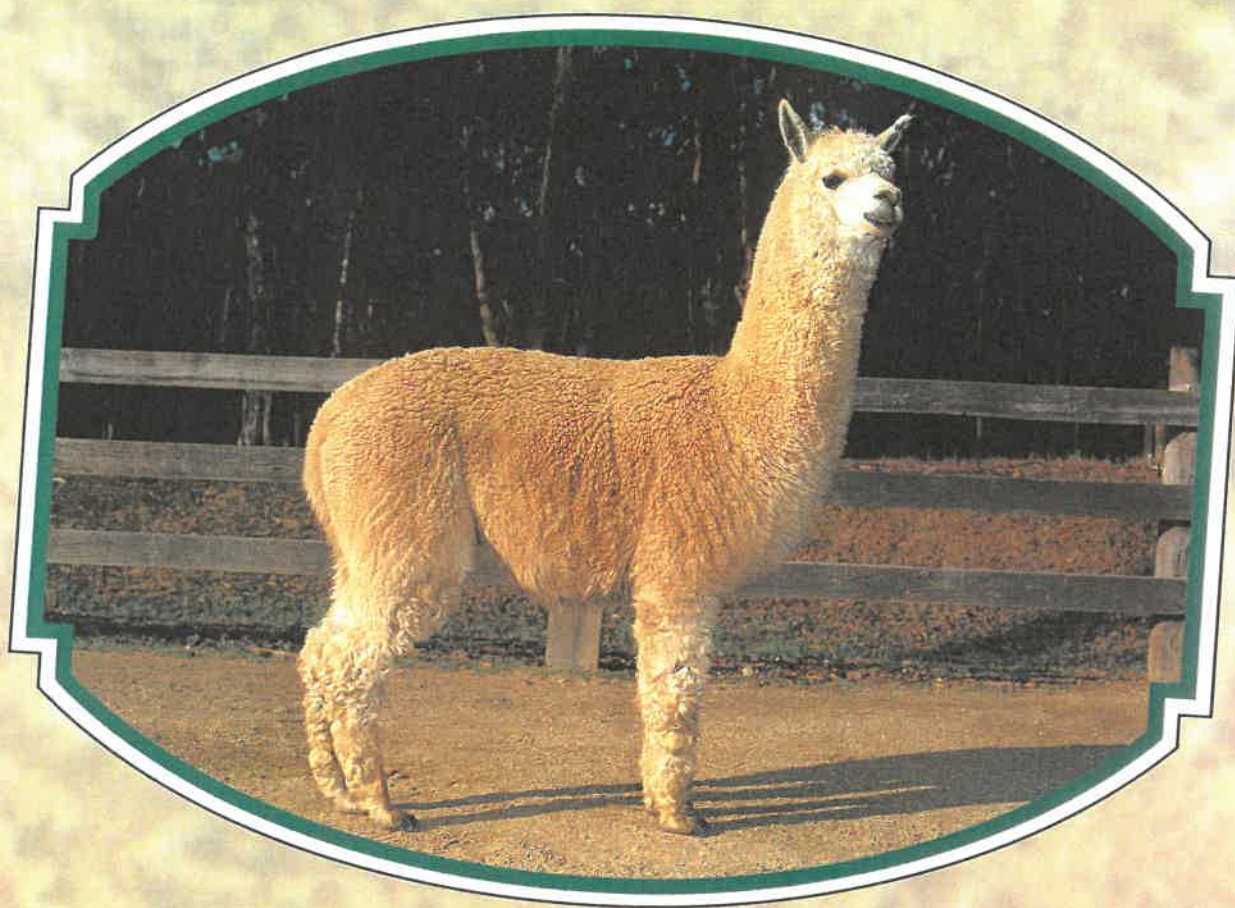
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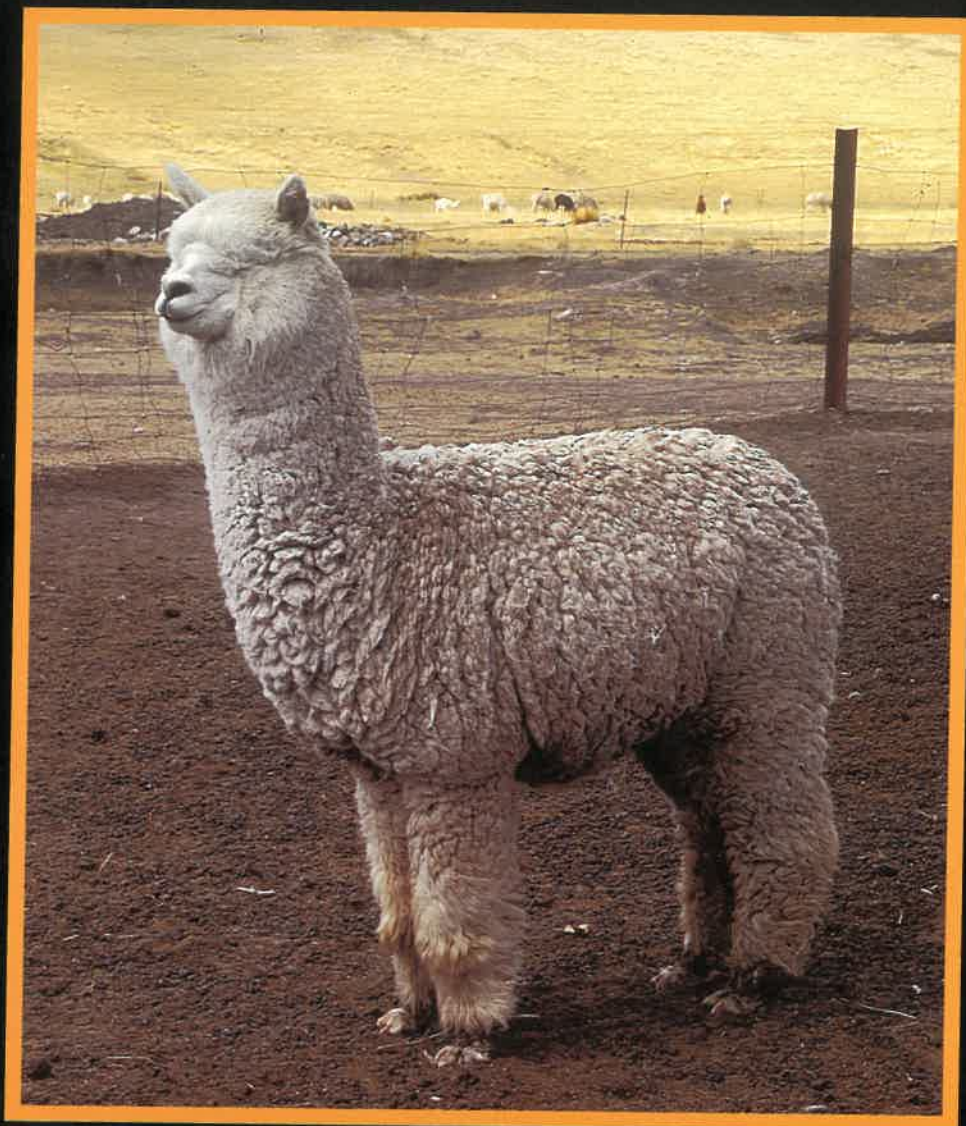
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